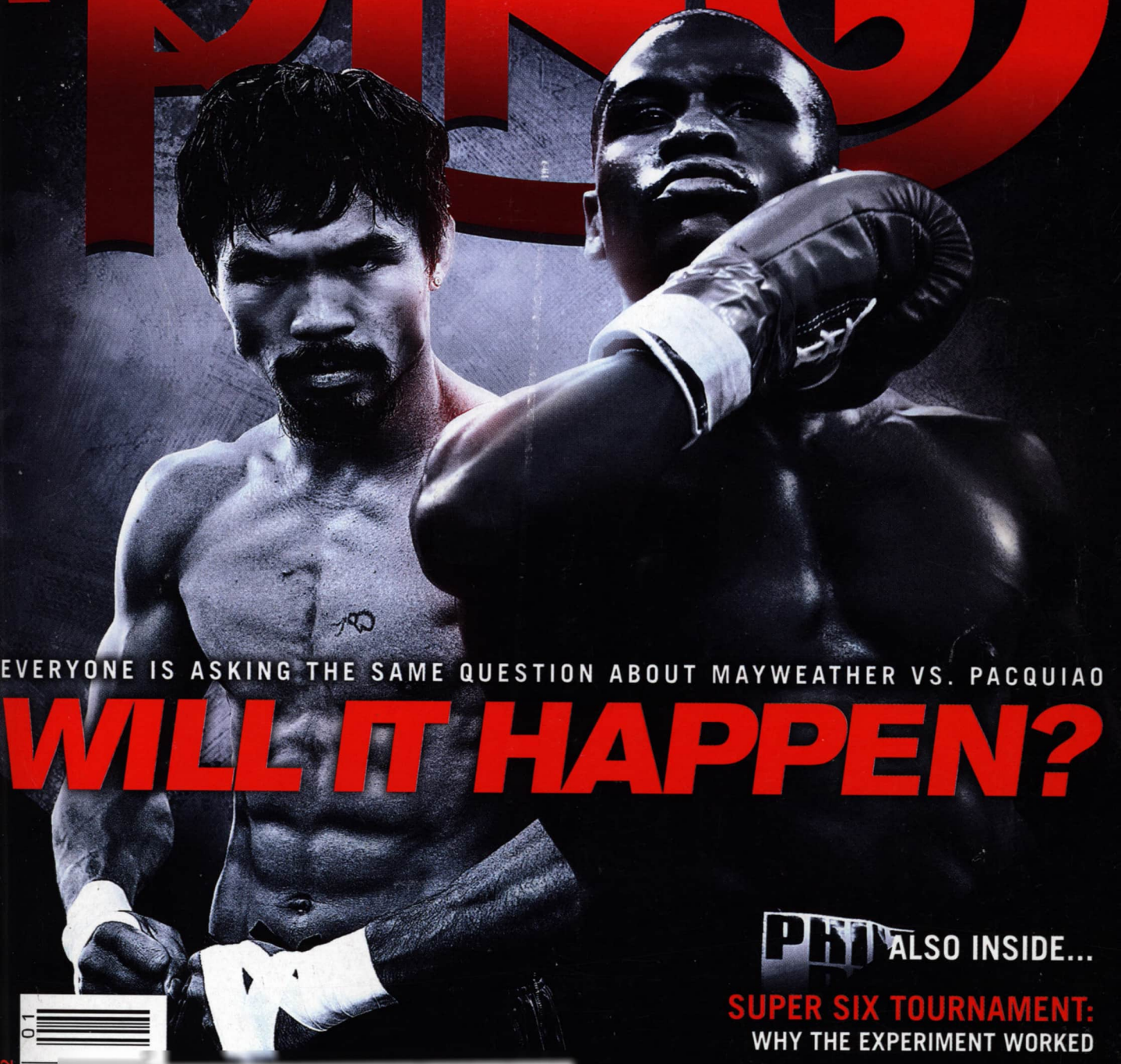
THE BIBLE OF BOXING®

The RING®



EVERYONE IS ASKING THE SAME QUESTION ABOUT MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO

WILL IT HAPPEN?

PHI ALSO INSIDE...

SUPER SIX TOURNAMENT:
WHY THE EXPERIMENT WORKED

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:
LARRY 'I'D KICK YOUR A--' MERCHANT

PLUS:
10 TALENTED YOUNG BOXERS
READY TO BUST LOOSE

JANUARY 2012

$8.95

THE RANKINGS ISSUE

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

Disfruta TECATE ® responsablemente. © 2009 Cervezas Mexicanas, White Plains, NY.

CONTENTS / JANUARY 2012

FEATURES

26 | OUT OF THE NORM
New head-injury studies could help fighters decide whether they should continue to fight or retire.
By Norm Frauenheim

30 | SUPER SIX
We look back on the Super Six World Boxing Classic, which concludes with the Andre Ward-Carl Froch fight.
By Ron Borges

38 | MISGUIDED OBSESSION?
Fighters and their handlers might be too fixated on maintaining the "0" in their loss column.
By Gary Andrew Poole

41 | GOLD STANDARD
Andre Ward is an American Olympic champion who also has found success as a professional, which used to be common.
By David McKee

46 | ON THE CUSP
Ten talented young fighters who we believe are poised to make major breakthroughs in 2012.
By Doug Fischer

52 | RING 100
THE RING gives you its annual list of the 100 best fighters in the world. Let the debates begin.
By Don Stradley

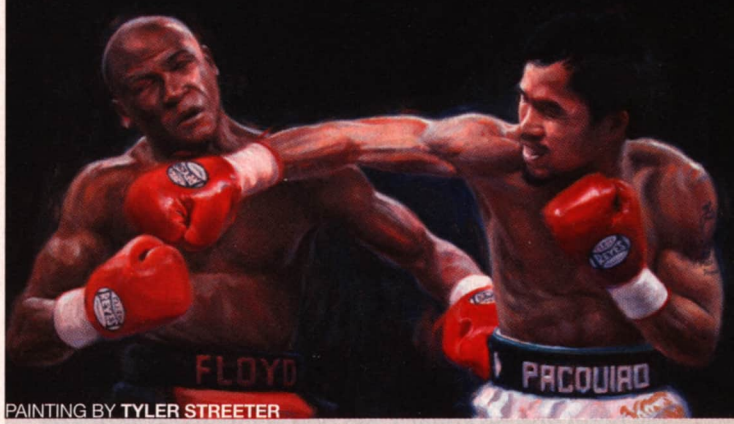
89 | SPRING LOADED
Dewey Bozella punctuated a heart-warming story by winning his professional debut at 52. Let's hope he doesn't fight again.
By Steve Springer

103 | Q&A: LARRY MERCHANT
The broadcasting icon sits down with THE RING to discuss a variety of subjects.
By Joseph Santoliquito

COVER STORY

82 | WILL IT EVER HAPPEN?
The boxing world has been clamoring for a showdown between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. for a few years now. Are we dreaming or will we actually see it?
By Norm Frauenheim

86 | WAR OF WORDS
The back-and-forth banter – some hot, some not – hasn't stopped since the possibility of a Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight was first raised.
By Gary Andrew Poole



PAINTING BY **TYLER STREETER**

DEPARTMENTS

4 | RINGSIDE
By Michael Rosenthal

6 | OPENING SHOTS

11 | COME OUT WRITING

12 | ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

20 | OUTSIDE THE ROPES
By Brian Harty

21 | SIX PACK
By Michael Rosenthal

22 | RING RATINGS

29 | AT THE FIGHTS: FAN PHOTOS

93 | RINGSIDE REPORTS
By Mike Coppinger

100 | FIGHT RESULTS

108 | YOU BE THE JUDGE
By Chuck Giampa

110 | FIGHT DOCTOR
By Dr. Margaret Goodman

112 | SWEETER SCIENCE
By Jake Donovan

114 | LOOKING AHEAD
By Mike Coppinger

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

It's easy for me to sit in front of my TV and criticize fighters who I believe aren't taking enough risks in the ring. I'm not the one taking blows to the head and body; they are.

But I know I wasn't the only one watching in anger as Omar Narvaez refused to engage Nonito Donaire for fear of getting hurt when they fought Oct. 15 on HBO. We all heard the boos, which eventually devolved into apropos chants of "this is bulls--t!"

I couldn't have said it better.

Narvaez, who moved up in weight for the fight, tasted a bit of Donaire's prodigious power early and seemed to decide right then that it would be best to forsake any chance of winning – and let risk-aversion dictate the remainder of a boring fight.

"The moment that I hit him hard, he just didn't want to take his chances," Donaire told The Associated Press.

That instinct is understandable. Narvaez was in over his head and he knew it. No one wants to be knocked senseless by a killer like Donaire.

Joshua Clottey, Miguel Cotto and Shane Mosley all reacted in a similar way when they felt Manny Pacquiao's power. They realized early that their mission was hopeless and went into survival mode, putting fans to sleep in the process.

No one tries to entertain fans more passionately than Pacquiao. But even he needs a willing partner.

This is why that tactic drives me mad: At the very least, fans (paying or otherwise) deserve an honest attempt at winning. I can't think of another sport in which one side simply doesn't give a genuine effort as often as in boxing, at least not so obviously.

We've all seen college football games between national powerhouses and small-time programs in which the smaller, slower athletes – who take plenty of physical punishment, mind you – play hard until the last play.

They might lose 70-0 but they fulfill their mission both to themselves, their teammates and the fans. They try.

You're probably thinking again at this point, "Yeah, but boxers shouldn't have to sacrifice brain cells to entertain others."

Hey, whether we like it or not, that's a part of the sport. No one forced Narvaez to become a boxer; he made that choice. And the simple fact is boxers must place themselves in some degree of danger if they hope to emerge victorious.

No one is saying that Narvaez – or Clottey, Cotto and Mosley – should charge directly into a hail of bullets in a misguided moment of bravado. That would be suicidal.

Only the rare warrior is willing to do that, the Basilios, the Gattis, the Katsidises, the Marquezes – fighters we love dearly but probably wouldn't want to emulate.

All I'm saying is that a fighter who steps through the ropes has an obligation to seek victory. Otherwise it's not a fight; it's a workout.

Narvarez demonstrated admirable athletic and defensive skills against Donaire, which is why one of the greatest fighters alive had to settle for a shutout decision. The Argentine never gave him a chance to look spectacular.

That apparently was Narvarez's primary goal: to avoid getting knocked out by a bigger, stronger opponent. The fact that he didn't win one round on any of the

three cards didn't seem to bother him, even though he had never lost before, which is disturbing.

And if you think I'm being callous, consider this: The HBO broadcasters seemed to believe that Narvarez never intended to win, citing their conversation with him in the fighter meetings. His goal, they said, was to parlay the exposure he received into bigger paydays.

Narvaez reportedly made $50,000 to fight Donaire, which is no fortune. He might say, "I'm not risking life and limb for 50 grand."

Sorry Omar. For fifty thousand or $50 million, the fans deserved better than that.

"I was bored," Donaire said. "When I know that the guy wouldn't open up, I kind of got bored ... The least you can do is hit me with a jab, hit me with something." Something.

Michael Rosenthal
Editor

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 91, NO. 1 (January 2012), is published monthly by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, 510 Township Line Rd., Suite 130, Blue bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S. and Canada (£4.95 in the UK). Subscription price $107.40 in the U.S., $140.40 in Canada and Mexico, $197.40 in remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2012 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. **Printed in U.S.A.**

VOLUME 91, NO. 1
JANUARY 2012

FOUNDER
NATHANIEL FLEISCHER
(1888-1972)

EDITOR
MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
DOUGLASS FISCHER

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
BRIAN HARTY

CREATIVE DIRECTION
STEPHEN CHAVEZ
MICHAEL FIORE

ANYONE™ COLLECTIVE
WEAREANYONE.COM

ART DIRECTOR
JONATHAN RODRIGUES

CONTROLLER
DEBORAH L. HARRISON

INTERN
MICHAEL COONEY

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
KENNETH J. GUDAITIS

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
ROBERT GASPARRI
213-233-2952
SEPUB@SEPUBLICATIONS.COM

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS
P.O. BOX 433122
PALM COAST, FL 32164-3122
1-800-846-6438
THERING@EMAILCUSTOMERSERVICE.COM

DIGITAL EDITION INQUIRIES
SUPPORT@IMIRUS.COM

SEND EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:
COMEOUTWRITING@SEPUBLICATIONS.COM
OR P.O. BOX 251753,
LOS ANGELES CA, 90025

IMAGE: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

Bernard Hopkins' trip to the canvas against Chad Dawson on Oct. 15 resulted in a truncated fight and a great deal of controversy.

IMAGE: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

Antonio DeMarco (right) stopped courageous Jorge Linares in an unforgettable war on the Bernard Hopkins-Chad Dawson card on Oct. 15.

IMAGE: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

Roman Gonzalez revealed one of his primary sources of motivation – baby son Roman Jr. – after he stopped Omar Soto on Oct. 1 in Las Vegas.

RAY STOPS SHORT

I just finished reading Sugar Ray Leonard's autobiography, The Big Fight: My Life in and Out of the Ring, published earlier this year by Viking, as well as Don Stradley's review of the book in the December issue of THE RING. I agree with Stradley that the book is not as bad as some other boxing memoirs and, although it is supposedly Leonard's cathartic attempt at reconciliation and redemption, it does feel as though, while looking inside, his "Sweetness" stopped short of going all the way.

Yes, he admits to abusing booze and drugs, being sexually abused as a young amateur, not being there for his son Ray Jr.'s childhood and repeatedly cheating on his first wife, Juanita. But where he pulls his punches the most, in my opinion, is when he fails to come clean about the "Superfight" with Marvelous Marvin Hagler in 1987.

Now, that may be because he truly feels he won. But I think it's because he can't stop perpetuating the con. I've watched that fight numerous times over the years. Upon finishing Leonard's book, I watched it again. And every time I do I come to the same conclusion: Hagler beat him. The champ pressed the action yet was the victim of Leonard stealing rounds by throwing flurries in front of the scorer's table during the last 30 seconds of the round, and one judge's ridiculous and lopsided tally.

Too bad that Ray, in baring it all, couldn't go the distance.

Pete Birle
Westfield, N.J.

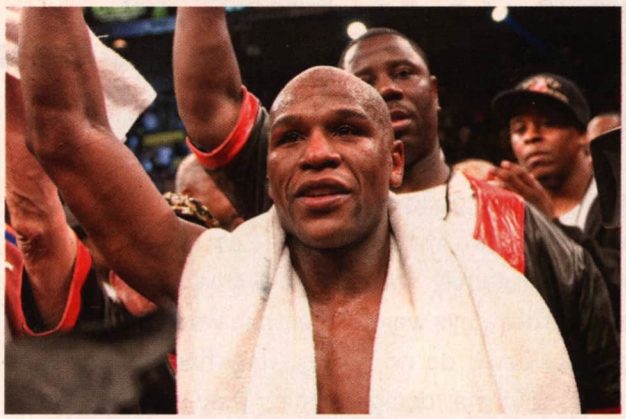


IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

FIGHT PACQUIAO, FLOYD

As they say in other sports, "take one for the team," Floyd Mayweather. Take one for the sport of boxing. Give us what we want and get in the ring with Manny Pacquiao. Put boxing back on the map. Mayweather will never get the recognition he desires and will always be remembered for selecting his opponents carefully unless he fights Pacquiao. Win or lose, fans will give him the recognition he deserves and he can hold his head high when he enters the Hall of Fame. This will kill two birds with one stone, gain recognition from fans and make the sport of boxing popular once again.

Steve Philipp
Marlton, N.J.

ENOUGH, DOG GONE IT

I was just reading an article online from the Manila Bulletin in which a writer wrote an entire article on Manny Pacquiao's dog. As a Filipino-American I'm just embarrassed about much of the stuff I read about Pacquiao. I mean you got to be kidding me? An article on a dog? I love him as a boxer. He's a great fighter but he's mortal. He shouldn't be viewed as the promised messiah. He puts his pants on the same as everyone else. Pacquiao is a very good man for giving back and being as humble and as he is. But he is a boxer. He is not a singer or rock star. He's not a politician. And he's not the second coming of Christ. He's Manny Pacquiao, the boxer, the human being.

Jonny Fernandez
Los Angeles

WRITE TO THE RING!

COME OUT WRITING, THE RING
P.O. Box 251753
Los Angeles, CA 90025
comeoutwriting@sepublications.com

E-mailed letters will include a writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

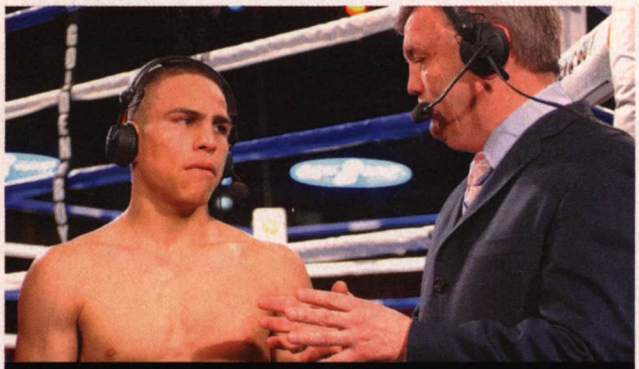
GREATEST SPORTS MOMENTS... OUTSIDE BOXING

IMAGE: JEFF JULIAN / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

BOB ARUM: It was in college, at NYU [New York University] in a fraternity basketball game. I was nowhere near good enough to play varsity ball, but I wasn't bad as a fraternity player. Zeta Beta Tau, which was my fraternity, was playing Sigma-something-or-other. Their guys were bigger than we were. But that game, I could do no wrong. They had guys hitting me, fouling me, doing anything they could to keep me from scoring. And whatever they did, I'd throw the ball up and it went in.

You can believe me or not; but I'm telling you, I hit 16 shots in a row and we won the game. It was a magical night. Nothing like that had happened to me before and nothing like that happened to me again. That was more than 50 years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday. So when Kobe or LeBron has a memorable game, I say to myself, "I know how that feels."

HEATED EXCHANGE



How would Teddy Atlas have reacted if he and Floyd Mayweather Jr. had exchanged heated words?

IMAGE: JOHN BOOZ / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The contentious on-camera exchange between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Larry Merchant in the aftermath of Mayweather's victory over Victor Ortiz on Sept. 17 is now part of boxing lore.

Floyd told Merchant, "HBO needs to fire you. You don't know s--- about boxing. You ain't s---." Merchant responded, "I wish I was 50 years younger, and I'd kick your a--."

That raises the question of how other other interviewers might have handled a similar verbal assault by Mayweather.

"I'm not sure," says Showtime's Jim Gray. "I really don't know. With several weeks hindsight, I'd probably say, 'Floyd, I'm glad you're not my boss.'"

Teddy Atlas of ESPN is a bit more expansive.

"It was a difficult moment," Atlas says. "Both sides have to take responsibility for what happened. Larry had his mind made up and was going somewhere with his questions. There was a mean spirit in what Floyd said, but Floyd felt that there was a mean spirit in the questions that he was being asked."

"I'm not a Floyd-hater," Atlas continues. "I don't condone what Floyd said. I disagree with a lot of the things that he says and does. But I try to see Floyd's side on issues too. And I've always liked Larry. He's a substantial guy with a lot of pride."

So ... to repeat the question: How would Atlas have reacted to a similar verbal assault by Mayweather?

"I don't want to go into that," Teddy answers. "I have an idea, but I don't want to go there. Maybe my initial approach would have brought a different response from Floyd. If not, and if he said the same things to me that he said to Larry, I would have been upset too. I'm not going to let someone disrespect me, and we are what we are. I know I would have reacted strongly."

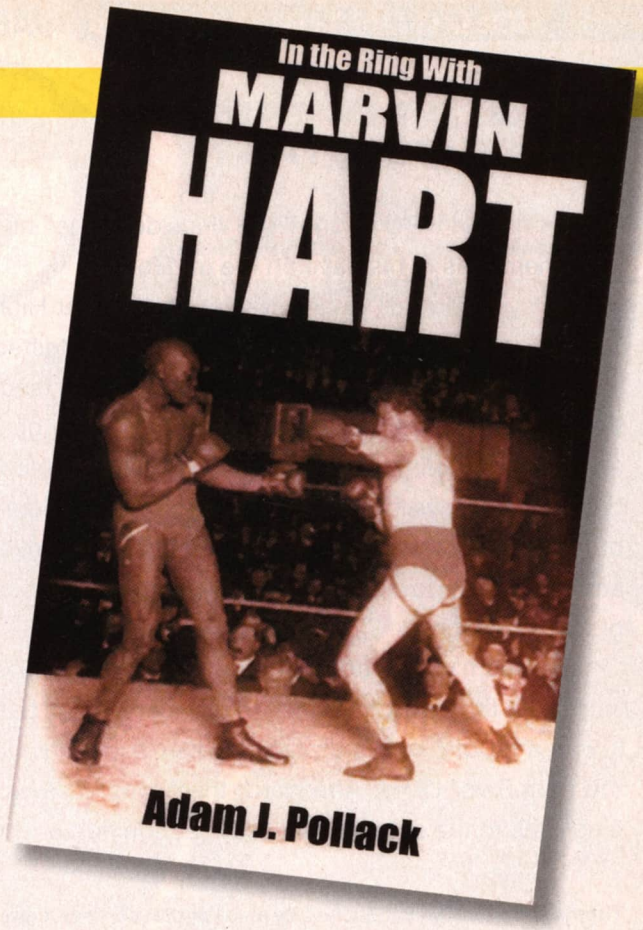
ILLUMINATING THE PAST

Greg Page of Louisville, Ky., knocked out Gerrie Coetzee in 1984 to become the WBA heavyweight champion. Who was the first heavyweight champion from Louisville?

Wrong.

Muhammad Ali was the second. The first was Marvin Hart. That bears mention because of a book by Adam Pollack entitled *In the Ring with Marvin Hart*.

Pollack is an Iowa attorney who is illuminating an era by writing biographies about boxing's early gloved champions. Books about John L. Sullivan, James J. Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons and James J Jeffries preceded his work on Hart. In each instance, Pollack draws heavily on contemporaneous newspaper and magazine accounts of fights. At times, the writing seems repetitive with fight report after fight report. But Pollack's world comes to life when he focuses on the big fights contested by his subjects.



Hart is the least known of boxing's gloved heavyweight champions. When James J. Jeffries retired undefeated in 1905, Marvelous Marvin (yes, that was his nickname) was matched against Jack Root in a bout that was refereed by Jeffries and promoted as a contest for the "championship" of the world. Hart was given the honor of competing for the title because, 10 weeks earlier in San Francisco, he'd been awarded a 20-round decision over Jack Johnson. Root was the designated opponent because, three years earlier, he'd bested Hart.

Hart-Root was contested in Reno, Nev., on July 3, 1905. By contract, it was a "fight to the finish." That is, the fight would continue until one of the combatants was knocked out. The two men battled in 120-degree heat with an edge to Root until one punch ended matters in the 12th round.

As recounted by Pollack, Root missed with a left hook to the jaw. Then …

"Hart stepped in close and ripped a terrific right uppercut that landed under and a little to the left of Root's heart, near the short ribs, possibly in the solar plexus. The sound of the punch could be heard in every part of the arena. Root dropped to the ground and began writhing. His face wore an expression of extreme pain. Jack rolled over and grasped the lower rope. He tried to pull himself up but was too feeble. He sank back to the floor and was counted out. A new world champion was proclaimed."

Hart was never fully accepted as champion by the public because Jeffries had retired undefeated and Hart hadn't beaten The Man to become The Man. His place in boxing history was further diminished when he lost in his first championship defense to Tommy Burns.

But in Pollack's words, "Hart was a very entertaining fighter who was never in a dull fight. He could be hit and hurt, but he always came forward, always hit hard, and he could keep it up. He was a fan's delight, deserving of more recognition than history has given him."

One might add that, in a quirk of fate, Hart's signature is now more valuable than the known existing signature of any other fighter. Once, it was of minimal value. But noted boxing memorabilia dealer Craig Hamilton says that, because of its scarcity, a well-documented Marvin Hart signature in good condition is now worth between $10,000 and $12,000. ■

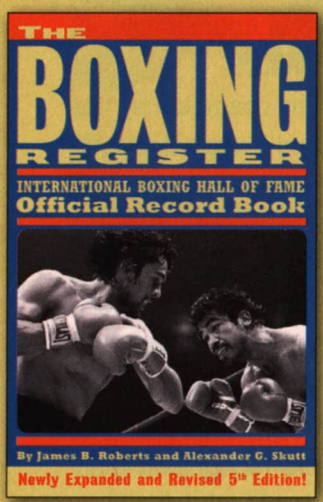
HAROLD LEDERMAN, FOOTBALL STAR?

Not really. But HBO's "unofficial ringside judge" has fond memories of his days on the gridiron.

"I played football when I was at Stuyvesant High School [a public school for academically gifted students in New York]," Lederman recalls. "The team was called the Peg Legs. Our uniforms were blue and gray. Sometimes I started as an offensive guard, but mostly I played linebacker. I intercepted a couple of passes and recovered a few fumbles. But I never scored a touchdown, and there were no moments of glory to speak of."

"The team wasn't bad," Lederman continues. "We won more than we lost. What I remember most is that it was a lot of fun. We'd practice after school along the East River Drive. Afterward, there was always a long walk to the subway and a longer ride home. But we were teammates and we got as close as kids can get. The camaraderie was the best part. I graduated from high school in 1956 when I was 16 years old. God, that was a long time ago."

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com.** His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.



The Boxing Register—
ISBN 978-1-59013-499-3,
Paperbound, $29.95
From McBooks Press.
Available from Independent Publishers Group (1-800-888-4741), www.mcbooks.com and from bookstores.

BRAND NEW—*The Boxing Register: International Boxing Hall of Fame Official Record Book,* 5th edition, by James B. Roberts and Alexander G. Skutt

THE GREATEST FIGHTERS OF ALL TIME

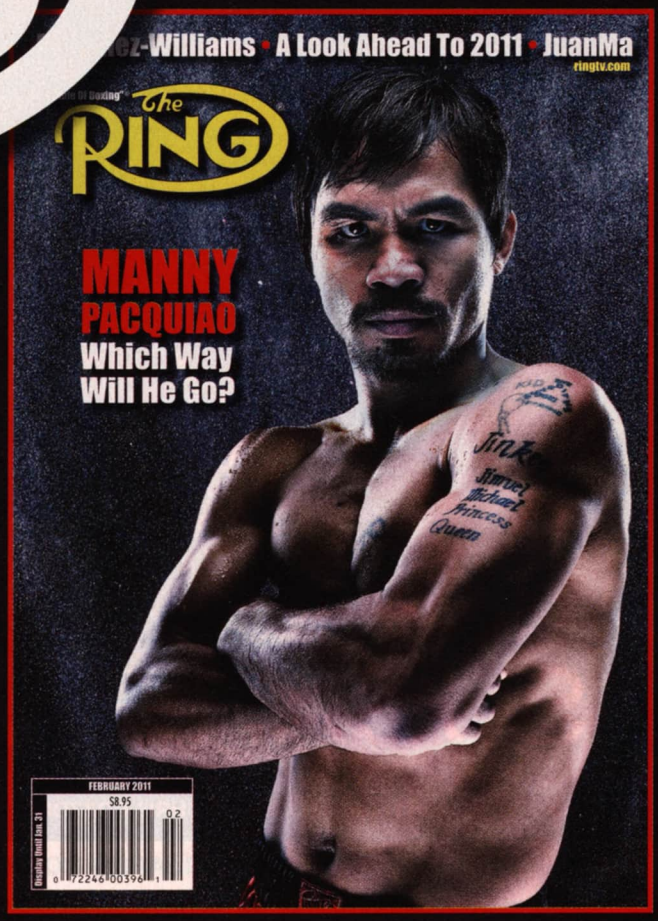
come to life in this fully illustrated guide to the *Sweet Science*. *The Boxing Register* is the most carefully researched and complete resource for boxing facts anywhere; 944 pages packed with biographies, action photos, and accurate fight-by-fight records of all of boxing's immortals.

"I find *The Boxing Register* an invaluable source of information and hardly a day goes by when I don't refer to it when writing or editing boxing copy." —Nigel Collins, Editor-in-Chief of *The Ring* magazine

"There is not a more indispensable volume on the history and arc of world boxing than *The Boxing Register*. For aficionados and chroniclers alike, this new and updated volume is a cause for genuine celebration." —Wil Haygood, author of *Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson*

The Bible of Boxing® since 1922!

The RING®



SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE AS MUCH AS 70%

Please Check Off The One You Wish To Order:

Save Over 35% Off Newsstand Price!

☐ Six Issues of The Ring for $33.70* 610300

Save Over 50% Off Newsstand Price!

☐ One Year of The Ring for $53.70* 610300

Plus The Ring Digital Edition for Free (A $29.95 value)!

SUPER SAVER—Over 60% Off Newsstand!

☐ Two Years of The Ring for $78.70* 610300

Plus The Ring Digital Edition for Free (A $59.90 value)!

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION—Over 70% Off Newsstand!

☐ One Year of The Ring Digital Edition for $29.95

MAIL TO: Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122

TELEPHONE: 1-800-846-6438

E-MAIL: thering@emailcustomerservice.com

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card #__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Expiration Date: ___/___ (MO/YR) __ __ __ (3-DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

Signature:_____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

CITY_____STATE_____ZIP_____

E-MAIL_____
(necessary for digital subscription)

TELEPHONE_____

*For Canada and Mexico: $52.50 for 6 issues; $86.70 for one year; $127.10 for two years. All other countries: $81 for 6 issues; $143.70 for one year; $210.60 for two years. International money orders only in U.S. funds only. Airmail shipping only outside the U.S. Please allow up to eight weeks before you receive your first magazine. Offer expires December 31, 2011.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD

WORDS: **LEM SATTERFIELD** / IMAGE: **CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

Five-division titleholder Sugar Ray Leonard is 55 years old but looks as if he could step into the boxing ring and win a title.

Leonard recently helped with the choreography in the film *Real Steel*, which features giant robots battling one another like boxers. And he also is enjoying the success of his new book, *The Big Fight: My Life In and Out of The Ring*, which details the personal trauma in his life.

Those of us who were around during his prime as a fighter, though, remember one of the all-time greats.

Leonard could do it all – box superbly, punch with tremendous power and move like a ballet dancer. He had unusual mental and physical toughness. And he had a smile that could light up an arena. The combination of ability and charisma made him a superstar.

Leonard probably is remembered best for his Olympic gold medal in 1976 and epic victories over Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran and Marvelous Marvin Hagler. However, he accomplished much more than that. He won seven titles in five weight divisions before finally retiring in 1997.

THE RING spoke to Leonard, who revealed to us the "Best I've Faced."

BEST OVERALL FIGHTER: WILFREDO BENITEZ

He proved to be identical to me as far as offense and defense. I was looking into a mirror when I fought him. Well, do you know that I ended up going to the hospital after that fight? I got back to my hotel, and I was dehydrated. I ran out of energy because I was dehydrated.

When Muhammad Ali said that the closest he ever came to death after a fight was after the fight with Joe Frazier, I could identify with that after the one with Benitez. I swear to God. So that was the closest thing to death for me, you know? It really, really was. I remember that like it was yesterday.

My hand speed kind of threw him off. But he had the confidence of a king. Even when I knocked that son of a bitch down, he got up and he was like, "Oh, I'm sorry, I just slipped." In the corner, when he was head butted, he just smiled. He was the epitome of what a fighter should be. Wilfred Benitez had that gladiator-like confidence.

They never mention Wilfred Benitez in the same breath as Roberto Duran, Marvin Hagler or Thomas Hearns, but he's right there with them. He brought out the best in me for almost 15 rounds. Beating him took every ounce of soul, spirit and courage that I had.

BEST BOXER

BENITEZ

He was a classic boxer, I mean, a classic boxer with a capitol "B." He was the epitome of what a pure boxer should be. He never really got credit for the sort of boxer that he was. He was a real tactician. He was a real boxer.

BEST PUNCHER

ROBERTO DURAN

Duran's punches were like stone. They really were. I've never been hit and hurt to the body pretty much by anyone except Duran. He has some vicious punches to the body. So, yeah, Roberto Duran.

BEST DEFENSE

FLOYD MAYWEATHER SR.

Remember, this was early on in my career, so that was Floyd Mayweather Sr. He was the best. It's not about whether he could beat me. But this man's defense was his speed.

The only thing that he lacked was power. He was it. It was Mayweather, even though I eventually got through it, it was Mayweather. I mean, look at his son, Floyd Jr. His defense, I was almost unable to penetrate it.

FASTEST HANDS: THOMAS HEARNS

Tommy Hearns, because, the reason I'm saying that is that he could hit you cleanly with a lead-off right, which very few fighters can do. With the exception of Muhammad Ali and myself, Tommy Hearns had that. A lead-off right. It was a thing of beauty. It's that total commitment.

FASTEST FEET

HEARNS

I've got to go with Tommy Hearns again. I can't envision anyone out-boxing me and out-maneuvering but Tommy. Surprisingly, Tommy Hearns. No one really out-boxed me but Tommy. I had to become a puncher against him.

BEST CHIN

MARVIN HAGLER

Hagler. It was granite. Just granite. I've never seen him down. Has he ever been knocked down? I saw him rocked by John Mugabi. I saw him rocked by Tommy Hearns. I think even Fulgencio Obelmejias rocked him. But I've never seen any signs of him representing the true definition of being hurt.

BEST JAB

HEARNS

He had what was like a piston-like jab. It was delivered with unbelievable speed. It hurt. It was accurate. It was like a right hand. It was almost always on target. Tommy could have beaten Marvin Hagler with that jab.

STRONGEST

MARCOS GERALDO

When I beat that guy [UD 10], in that small ring, with that elderly referee, God bless him, I knew that I could beat anybody. Did you see him when he hurt me? That fight resonated with me so well. It gave me the most confidence that I could beat anybody. When that guy hurt me bad, I took some shots, that was one of my top performances considering the fact that that ring had to be 16-by-16.

SMARTEST

BENITEZ

I know that my hand speed threw him off and duped him because he was a classic thinker. He was smart. He was so technical and poised. Benitez had the confidence of a king. You never saw him out of position. He was so smart. Remember, he beat Roberto Duran. So in his prime, everybody he fought, he took to them to the limit. ■

Mario Lopez's love of boxing has extended to the broadcasting booth and post-fight interviews.

CELEBRITIES WHO ARE DEVOTED TO THE SWEET SCIENCE. ***THIS MONTH:***

TELEVISION PERSONALITY MARIO LOPEZ

WORDS: **MICHAEL ROSENTHAL** / IMAGE: **MARY ANN OWEN / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

Everyone knows Mario Lopez as a remarkably busy television personality, perhaps mostly for his role as the teen-aged character A.C. Slater on the popular sitcom *Saved by the Bell* in the late 1980s and early '90s.

What you might not know is that he is a terrific athlete who likes to throw down in the ring and is a devoted boxing fan.

Lopez inherited his love of boxing from his grandfather and father, with whom he began watching fights as a small child. He went on to become an accomplished high school wrestler and then found boxing after graduation.

He has been a regular at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood ever since.

Lopez, 38, is so committed to the sport that he has been working on a boxing documentary he hopes will promote the sport.

"I'm trying to introduce the sport to a younger generation in a cool, hip way," he told THE RING. "I'm interviewing some of the most influential people in the sport from Pacquiao to Oscar to Tyson and the promoters. Everyone.

"It's shot through the eyes of a fan paying the sport homage. I really admire the sport. I believe these are the most noble athletes."

THE RING recently had a chat with Lopez to find out more:

How did you discover boxing?

Boxing was the only thing my grandfather and father and I watched together. We didn't watch baseball or basketball; we watched fights. I have great memories of those times. I don't even consider them sports fans. They were fight fans. I remember how passionate they were about it. So I got into it, too.

What was the first big fight you watched with your father and grandfather?

Roberto Duran, when he fought (Sugar Ray) Leonard. They fought a lot on network TV, on Wide World of Sports. I saw Leonard a lot. I think it was Duran-

Leonard II, in 1980. I was a little kid, 6 or 7, but I remember my grandfather getting really excited about it. My dad, too. That's my first memory of boxing.

I know you box yourself. How did that start?

I didn't compete in it as a kid because I was already in the entertainment business. I did wrestle in high school, though. I was always physical. And I was partial to individual sports because I couldn't do team sports. I was working. After high school, though, I still needed an outlet. I was so hyper. I worked a few blocks from the Wild Card. I met Freddie, who was super cool. And I saw I could train alongside world champions and ex-cons at the same time. This was the place for me.

Tell me about your first experiences giving and taking punches.

I started working with a trainer and he was tripping out about how game I was to get in there. I wanted to spar right away. I was used to the contact [because of his wrestling experience]. The last thing anyone wanted to do was get their ass kicked by a Hollywood kid. I earned some respect, I think; I went in there and threw down. I didn't know exactly what I was doing. I mimicked stuff I'd seen watching fights. I had bad habits from wrestling, like squaring up too much. Those are hard to break. I picked it up pretty quick, though.

Did you take part in actual fights?

Freddie started having these smokers, three-round smokers [at the Wild Card]. I fought in about eight of them. They kept matching me tougher and tougher. A couple hundred people were there to watch. It was like an old-school fight club. ... I did pretty well. I think if you asked Freddie Roach how I do against other entertainment people, he'd say I'm the best one hands-down so far. I say that only because he says it. I like to test myself, to push myself, whether that's the smokers or the white-collar boxing. Those are fun, too. I love doing this and I'll continue as long as I can.

Any injuries?

I hurt my hand. I don't think it's broken but it's swollen. It doesn't look too good. I can't make a fist. And I got hit with an elbow on the top of the head a few weeks ago and busted it open. I got six staples. I still get nicks; the punches are coming hard. A makeup artist asked, "What's wrong with you? Why don't you do something else? I figure when my body breaks down, I'll do something else." ■

BOXERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (BOC) · BOC · FOUNDED 1988

Boxers Organizing Committee (BOC)

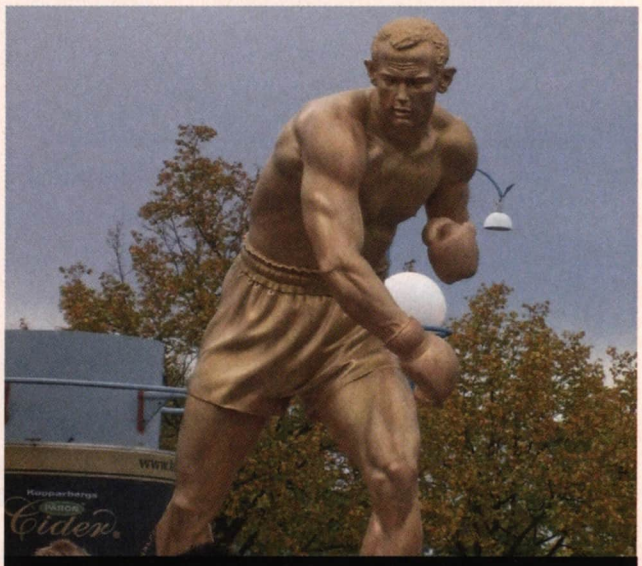
Paul Johnson
Executive Director
4042 88th Lane NE
Blaine, MN 55014
763-438-2447
www.boxers.org
johnson4042@aol.com

Attention Boxers: Please contact us to discuss your rights!

"Boxers must be part of the equation."
— José Chegüi Torres

WORDS: **BRIAN HARTY** / IMAGE: **PIA SKOOG JOHANSSON**

Showtime veteran Ken Hershman gained some desk space by trading in his "Executive Vice President & General Manager, Sports & Event Programming" plaque for the more minimalist "President of HBO Sports." The extra room will come in handy, as Hershman now oversees what amounts to the fullest plate in the business, including a slew of successful news and documentary series, the HBO Pay-Per-View arm and by far the biggest budget in boxing. ... Cruiserweight-turned-heavyweight **David Haye** gave himself the gift of retirement, keeping his long-standing promise to leave the sport by his 31st birthday. Haye departs financially secure, excited about his prospects in showbiz, and confident in his resolve to be the exception, to eschew the fate of so many before him who couldn't walk away; he calls it a day on his own terms, a young man with nothing left to prove, his judgment unclouded by the siren song of fleeting glory, the base pursuit of "prizes," but ready instead to lead a life of real courage, the courage to say "I have enough. I don't need to fight anymore," and to reap the worldly rewards due to a man of such... wait, what?... really?... oh. ... Cruiserweight-turned-heavyweight **David Haye** emerged from retirement on the news that he was in negotiations to fight WBC heavyweight champion **Vitali Klitschko**, probably in early March … Former WBO heavyweight champion and "Rocky V" co-star **Tommy Morrison** was arrested in Tennessee and then shipped to a Kansas jail to face 2010 drug charges. ... Swedish heavyweight icon **Ingemar Johansson**, who passed away in 2009, was honored with an eight-foot bronze statue outside Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg, Sweden, where he knocked out **Eddie Machen** in front of more than 50,000 fans in 1958 to earn a shot at the world title, which he subsequently won by stopping **Floyd Patterson**. Citing Johansson's well-known reputation as a bon vivant, *The New York Times Magazine*'s Gay Talese speculated in 1961 that he "possibly knows as much about the female form as any man since Vesalius," and described the Patterson victory as "a setback for austerity, a victory for the Copacabana." ... Another former heavyweight champion, **Michael Spinks**, is suing the estate of his former promoter, the late **Ronald "Butch" Lewis**, for allegedly failing to honor an agreement between the two. The suit, which also names Black Entertainment Television founder Robert L. Johnson as a defendant, claims that Lewis agreed to manage more than $24 million earned from Spinks' career and provide living expenses for the rest of the fighter's life, but that the money was instead spent on a $500,000 party a month before Lewis' death in July, and then the rest bequeathed to the promoter's children. ... Speaking of crazy parties, **Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero** rubbed shoulders (ouch! not that one!) with Hollywood's elite at a ceremony presenting the 25th Annual American Cinematheque Award to Robert Downey Jr., who presumably arrived in a flying tuxedo. ... And **Manny Pacquiao**, himself a sort of superhero, revealed in a *Playboy* interview that he keeps his powers at peak potency by abstaining from sex for 21 days leading up to a fight. Trainer **Freddie Roach** is the wingman to blame for this idea, saying that "sex lowers your testosterone, so you're not as mean." The article also revealed Pacman's fondness for fighting roosters, massive portraits of himself and peach-colored walls, and that when traveling about the Philippines he has his choice of a $8.5 million private jet, turboprop or bulletproof Hummer. Super indeed. ■



Ingemar Johansson obviously meant a great deal to the citizens of his hometown of Gothenburg, Sweden, who erected a statue in his likeness outside Ullevi Stadium.

ARREOLA WENT FROM FLAB TO (RELATIVELY) FAB VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT. HERE'S HOW HE DID IT.

WORDS: **MICHAEL ROSENTHAL**
IMAGES: **BRYAN CROWE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES / CRAIG BENNETT**

We acknowledge that going to Chris Arreola for advice on fitness is like going to George W. Bush for elocution lessons.

After all, it was not long ago that the heavyweight contender was known as much for his flab as for his considerable accomplishments in the ring. Arreola was the poster boy for bad training habits.

That's changed, though. Consider: Arreola, who is 6-foot-4, averaged 254.7 pounds (115.8 Kgs) in eight fights between 2008 and 2011. He has averaged 235.3 (107 Kgs) in three fights since then, all three of which were one-sided victories.

Arreola simply decided that he needed to make a 100-percent commitment to reach his potential and, to the astonishment of many, he followed through.

How did he do it?

It's not overly complicated: He eats out less often, has cut back drastically on his beer consumption and tries to be active every single day while he isn't in training for a fight.

"The main thing is not eating out as much," Arreola told THE RING. "That's what I try to emphasize as much as possible. I ate mainly fast food … a lot of fast food. And I ate it late at night, at midnight or later. On TV they have a lot of commercials for food. I'd get hungry and just go get food.

"I would go to McDonalds and get a whole combo and then add another burger. I overindulged. Or I would go to a place in Riverside (Calif.) called Alberto's, which is open 24 hours. I'd get a burrito and a big nachos and eat it all myself. And I'd drink an Horchata, which is all sugar water.

"I still might go to McDonalds occasionally but I'll order just a hamburger and a bottle of water. That's enough to fill me up. The key is not to splurge."

And there's his activity level.

Chris Arreola will never be an Adonis but he transformed his body in a fairly short period of time.

Arreola admitted that he did a lot of laying around between fights in the recent past. As a result of that and his eating habits, he walked around at 270-280 pounds between fights. He weighed a whopping 290 at the start of the camp before his 10th-round TKO loss to Vitali Klitschko in 2009.

Now, with his new attitude, he walks around at about 245 pounds.

"I try to do something every day when I'm not training – running, basketball, something athletic with my daughter, anything," he said. "I used to just lay around and wait for (trainer) Henry (Ramirez) to say, 'OK, you fight in eight weeks against so-and-so in such-and-such place,'" he said. "… I came into (the Klitschko) camp at 290. It was horrible. Henry and (strength and conditioning coach) Darryl Hudson spent the whole time trying to get me down to a decent weight. It was a fat camp, not a boxing camp.

"Now it's about boxing, working on my craft. The only thing that's missing in camp now is my timing because of the time you take off. And that comes back in about a week. Everything is so much easier now being in shape." ■

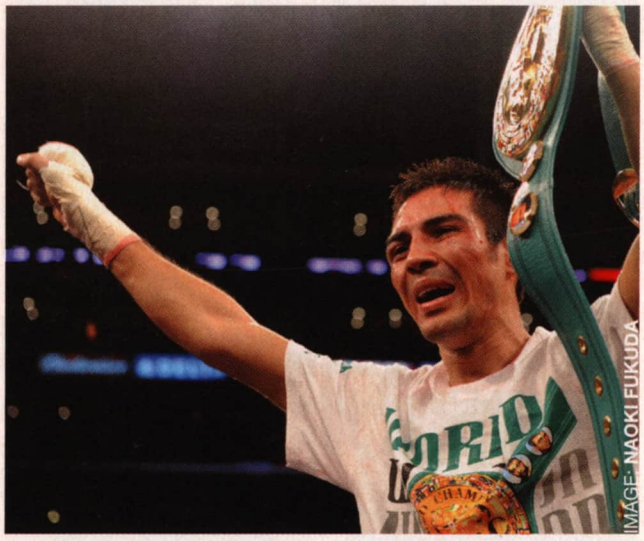


IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH
ANTONIO DeMARCO

Antonio DeMarco's steely determination never wavered even as he lost round after round to Jorge Linares on Oct. 15 in Los Angeles. The lanky Mexican never stopped marching into enemy fire, biding his time.

And DeMarco's perseverance would be rewarded. He opened up two horrible cuts on Linares' face, one above his right eye and another on the bridge of his nose that turned his face a crimson red and impaired his vision.

DeMarco took advantage in Round 10, stalking his wounded prey and throwing hard punches that began to take a significant toll now that a brave Linares couldn't see. In the 11th, DeMarco closed the show by delivering a barrage of punches that forced referee Raul Caiz Sr. to intervene and save Linares from further punishment.

The dramatic stoppage was all the more dramatic when one considers the scorecards: DeMarco was down big on all three, 99-91, 98-92 and 98-92, making this one of the more stunning come-from-behind KOs in recent memory.

The victory, which gave DeMarco the WBC lightweight title, makes him a big player in a loaded 135-pound division going into 2012.

RATINGS ANALYSIS
FOR PERIOD ENDED OCT. 24, 2011

POUND FOR POUND: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (No. 8 last month) switched places with Timothy Bradley (No. 7 last month) after his strong performance in a unanimous-decision victory over Edgar Sosa on Oct. 21.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: David Haye (No. 4 last month) was dropped from the ratings because he announced his retirement. Unbeaten Bulgarian Kubrat Pulev, a former amateur star, entered the ratings at No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Yoan Pablo Hernandez (unrated last month) entered at No. 2 after defeating No. 1 Steve Cunningham on Oct. 1. Cunningham dropped to No. 3. Marco Huck (No. 2 last month) ascended to No. 1. Danny Green (No. 10 last month) is out.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Bernard Hopkins (champion last month) and Chad Dawson (No. 3 last month) retained their positions pending an appeal of Dawson's controversial TKO victory on Oct. 15.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Grzegorz Proksa entered the ratings at No. 4 after stopping Sebastian Sylvester (No. 4 last month) in three rounds on Oct. 1. Sylvester, 1-2-1 in his last four fights, dropped out.

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Kell Brook (No. 10 last month) moved past Shane Mosley (No. 9 last month), Mike Jones (No. 8 last month) and Jan Zaveck (No. 6 last month) into the No. 6 spot as a result of his victory over Rafal Jackiewicz (No. 7 last month) on Oct. 8. Mosley and Jones stayed put, while Zaveck dropped one notch. Unbeaten Selcuk Aydin entered the ratings at No. 10. Jackiewicz, who has lost his last two fights at 147 pounds, dropped out.

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Antonio DeMarco ascended from No. 7 last month to No. 5 after his KO of No. 10 Jorge Linares on Oct. 15. Paulus Moses (No. 5 last month) and Miguel Vazquez (No. 6 last month) dropped one wrung each. Linares remained at No. 10. Then, later in the month, Miguel Acosta (No. 4 last month) dropped out after losing a unanimous decision to unrated Richard Abril, Acosta's second consecutive loss at 135 pounds. The shakeup gave us a chance to do some maintenance in the division. DeMarco and Vazquez ascended to Nos. 3 and 4, leap-frogging Kevin Mitchell (No. 3 last month). We felt DeMarco and Vazquez have accomplished more than Mitchell. Mitchell dropped to No. 5. Abril entered at No. 9.

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS: Mzonke Fana and Ricky Burns (Nos. 1 and 2 last month) dropped out of the ratings for different reasons. Fana hasn't fought since September of 2010. Burns gave up his WBO title and moved up in weight to face Michael Katsidis in November. Unbeaten young contenders Eloy Perez and Luis Cruz entered at Nos. 9 and 10, respectively

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS: Ryol Li Lee dropped out because he has moved up in weight. He was replaced by Masaaki Serie of Japan, who entered at No. 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS: Juan Alberto Rosas is out because he moved up in weight. He was replaced by Daiki Kameda, who enters at No. 10.

FLYWEIGHTS: Takefumi Sakata and Denkaosan Kaovichit dropped out, Sakata because of inactivity and Kaovichit because he moved up in weight. Juan Carlos Reveco and Wilbert Aicab came in at Nos. 9 and 10, respectively. Later, Wonjongkam retained his championship with his victory over Sosa, who dropped to No. 10.

JR. FLYWEIGHTS: Donnie Nietes (unrated last month) replaced Ramon Hirales at No. 8 after defeating Hirales by a unanimous decision. Hirales, who has lost two of his last three fights, dropped out.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   53-3-2 (38 KOs) | *WELTERWEIGHT*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   42-0-0 (26 KOs) | *WELTERWEIGHT*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   48-2-2 (27 KOs) | *MIDDLEWEIGHT*
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   27-1-0 (18 KOs) | *BANTAMWEIGHT*
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   53-5-1 (39 KOs) | *LIGHTWEIGHT*
6. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   56-3-0 (49 KOs) | *HEAVYWEIGHT*
7. **PONGSAKLEK. WONJONGKAM**
   83-3-1 (45 KOs) | *FLYWEIGHT*
8. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   27-0-0 (11 KOs) | *JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT*
9. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
   28-1-1 (24 KOs) | *FLYWEIGHT*
10. **ANDRE WARD**
    24-0-0 (13 KOs) | *SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT*

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, which the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

The Ring RATINGS
AS OF SEPT., 24, 2011

FOR WEEKLY UPDATED RING RATINGS, GO TO RINGTV.COM

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**YURIORKIS GAMBOA** 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2.	**CHRIS JOHN** 45-0-2 (22 KOs)
3.	**ORLANDO SALIDO** 36-11-2 (24 KOs)
4.	**JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
5.	**DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** 41-4-0 (34 KOs)
6.	**CRISTOBAL CRUZ** 39-12-3 (23 KOs)
7.	**RAFAEL MARQUEZ** 40-7-0 (36 KOs)
8.	**JHONNY GONZALEZ** 50-7-0 (44 KOs)
9.	**MIKEY GARCIA** 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
10.	**BILL DIB** 32-1-0 (19 KOs)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** 56-3-0 (49 KOs)
1.	**VITALI KLITSCHKO** 43-2-0 (40 KOs)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN** 22-0-0 (15 KOs)
3.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK** 44-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**EDDIE CHAMBERS** 36-2-0 (18 KOs)
5.	**ROBERT HELENIUS** 16-0-0 (11 KOs)
6.	**ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** 32-1-0 (21 KOs)
7.	**DENIS BOYTSOV** 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
8.	**RUSLAN CHAGAEV** 27-2-1 (17 KOs)
9.	**CHRIS ARREOLA** 33-2-0 (28 KOs)
10.	**KUBRAT PULEV** 14-0-0 (6 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MARCO HUCK** 34-1-0 (25 KOs)
2.	**YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ** 25-1-0 (13 KOs)
3.	**STEVE CUNNINGHAM** 24-3-0 (12 KOs)
4.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** 45-2-1 (32 KOs)
5.	**DENIS LEBEDEV** 22-1-0 (17 KOs)
6.	**TROY ROSS** 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
7.	**ANTONIO TARVER** 29-6-0 (20 KOs)
8.	**GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI** 29-3-1 (12 KOs)
9.	**OLA AFOLABI** 18-2-3 (8 KOs)
10.	**GUILLERMO JONES** 37-3-2 (29 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**BERNARD HOPKINS** 52-6-2 (32 KOs)
1.	**JEAN PASCAL** 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
2.	**TAVORIS CLOUD** 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
3.	**CHAD DAWSON** 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
4.	**NATHAN CLEVERLY** 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
5.	**ADRIAN DIACONU** 27-3-0 (15 KOs)
6.	**ZSOLT ERDEI** 33-0-0 (18 KOs)
7.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV** 12-1-0 (8 KOs)
8.	**KARO MURAT** 24-1-1 (14 KOs)
9.	**GABRIEL CAMPILLO** 21-3-1 (8 KOs)
10.	**ISMAYL SILLAKH** 16-0-0 (13 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**ANDRE WARD** 24-0-0 (13 KOs)
2.	**CARL FROCH** 28-1-0 (20 KOs)
3.	**LUCIAN BUTE** 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
4.	**MIKKEL KESSLER** 44-2-0 (33 KOs)
5.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ** 40-2-0 (23 KOs)
6.	**SAKIO BIKA** 28-5-2 (19 KOs)
7.	**GLEN JOHNSON** 51-15-2 (35 KOs)
8.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM** 32-3-0 (26 KOs)
9.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN** 16-0-1 (11 KOs)
10.	**GEORGE GROVES** 13-0-0 (10 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C	**SERGIO MARTINEZ** 48-2-2 (27 KOs)
1.	**FELIX STURM** 36-2-1 (15 KOs)
2.	**DANIEL GEALE** 26-1-0 (15 KOs)
3.	**MATTHEW MACKLIN** 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**GRZEGORZ PROKSA** 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
5.	**JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.** 43-0-1 (30 KOs)
6.	**SEBASTIAN ZBIK** 30-1-0 (10 KOs)
7.	**DMITRY PIROG** 19-0-0 (15 KOs)
8.	**PAUL WILLIAMS** 40-2-0 (27 KOs)
9.	**HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM** 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
10.	**MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO** 52-5-1 (45 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MIGUEL COTTO** 36-2-0 (29 KOs)
2.	**ALFREDO ANGULO** 20-1-0 (17 KOs)
3.	**SAUL ALVAREZ** 38-0-1 (28 KOs)
4.	**VANES MARTIROSYAN** 30-0-0 (19 KOs)
5.	**ERISLANDY LARA** 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
6.	**CARLOS MOLINA** 19-4-2 (6 KOs)
7.	**CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE** 31-4-0 (18 KOs)
8.	**SERGIY DZINZIRUK** 37-1-0 (23 KOs)
9.	**PAWEL WOLAK** 29-1-1 (19 KOs)
10.	**AUSTIN TROUT** 23-0-0 (13 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MANNY PACQUIAO** 53-3-2 (38 KOs)
2.	**FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** 42-0-0 (26 KOs)
3.	**VICTOR ORTIZ** 29-3-2 (22 KOs)
4.	**ANDRE BERTO** 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
5.	**VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO** 32-0-0 (21 KOs)
6.	**KELL BROOK** 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
7.	**JAN ZAVECK** 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
8.	**MIKE JONES** 25-0-0 (19 KOs)
9.	**SHANE MOSLEY** 46-7-1 (39 KOs)
10.	**SELCUK AYDIN** 22-0-0 (17 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**AMIR KHAN** 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
2.	**TIMOTHY BRADLEY** 27-0-0 (11 KOs)
3.	**MARCOS MAIDANA** 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**DEVON ALEXANDER** 22-1-0 (13 KOs)
5.	**LUCAS MATTHYSSE** 28-2-0 (26 KOs)
6.	**LAMONT PETERSON** 29-1-1 (15 KOs)
7.	**ERIK MORALES** 52-7-0 (36 KOs)
8.	**ZAB JUDAH** 41-7-0 (28 KOs)
9.	**DANNY GARCIA** 22-0-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**MIKE ALVARADO** 31-0-0 (22 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C	**JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** 53-5-1 (39 KOs)
1.	**BRANDON RIOS** 28-0-1 (21 KOs)
2.	**ROBERT GUERRERO** 29-1-1 (18 KOs)
3.	**ANTONIO DEMARCO** 26-2-1 (19 KOs)
4.	**MIGUEL VAZQUEZ** 29-3-0 (13 KOs)
5.	**KEVIN MITCHELL** 32-1-0 (24 KOs)
6.	**PAULUS MOSES** 28-1-0 (19 KOs)
7.	**JOHN MURRAY** 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
8.	**JOHN MOLINA** 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
9.	**RICHARD ABRIL** 17-2-1 (8 KOs)
10.	**JORGE LINARES** 31-2-0 (20 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**TAKASHI UCHIYAMA** 17-0-0 (14 KOs)
2.	**JUAN CARLOS SALGADO** 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
3.	**ROMAN MARTINEZ** 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
4.	**JORGE SOLIS** 40-3-2 (29 KOs)
5.	**TAKAHIRO AO** 21-2-1 (10 KOs)
6.	**ADRIEN BRONER** 21-0-0 (17 KOs)
7.	**DIEGO MAGDALENO** 20-0-0 (7 KOs)
8.	**ARGENIS MENDEZ** 18-2-0 (9 KOs)
9.	**ELOY PEREZ** 22-0-2 (6 KOs)
10.	**LUIS CRUZ** 19-0-0 (15 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2.	**RICO RAMOS** 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
3.	**AKIFUMA SHIMODA** 23-3-1 (10 KOs)
4.	**POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM** 45-2-0 (31 KOs)
5.	**TAKALANI NDLOVU** 32-6-0 (18 KOs)
6.	**GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX** 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
7.	**STEVE MOLITOR** 33-2-0 (12 KOs)
8.	**JORGE ARCE** 58-6-2 (45 KOs)
9.	**WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.** 20-1-1 (17 KOs)
10.	**MASAAKI SERIE** 20-4-0 (9 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**NONITO DONAIRE** 27-1-0 (18 KOs)
2.	**ANSELMO MORENO** 31-1-1 (11 KOs)
3.	**ABNER MARES** 22-0-1 (13 KOs)
4.	**JOSEPH AGBEKO** 28-3-0 (22 KOs)
5.	**VIC DARCHINYAN** 37-3-1 (27 KOs)
6.	**ERIC MOREL** 45-2-0 (23 KOs)
7.	**YONNHY PEREZ** 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
8.	**KOKI KAMEDA** 26-1-0 (16 KOs)
9.	**MALCOLM TUNACAO** 29-2-3 (18 KOs)
10.	**CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL** 24-2-0 (18 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**OMAR NARVAEZ** 35-1-2 (19 KOs)
2.	**TOMONOBU SHIMIZU** 19-3-1 (9 KOs)
3.	**HUGO CAZARES** 35-7-2 (25 KOs)
4.	**SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI** 19-4-1 (7 KOs)
5.	**TOMAS ROJAS** 36-13-1 (24 KOs)
6.	**NOBUO NASHIRO** 15-3-1 (9 KOs)
7.	**YOTA SATO** 22-2-1 (11 KOs)
8.	**TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA** 18-2-0 (12 KOs)
9.	**CESAR SEDA** 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
10.	**DAIKI KAMEDA** 22-2-0 (14 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C	**PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** 83-3-1 (45 KOs)
1.	**HERNAN MARQUEZ** 31-2-0 (24 KOs)
2.	**LUIS CONCEPCION** 23-2-0 (18 KOs)
3.	**MORUTI MTHALANE** 27-2-0 (18 KOs)
4.	**BRIAN VILORIA** 29-3-0 (16 KOs)
5.	**MILAN MELINDO** 25-0-0 (9 KOs)
6.	**ROCKY FUENTES** 29-6-2 (17 KOs)
7.	**JULIO CESAR MIRANDA** 36-6-1 (29 KOs)
8.	**JUAN CARLOS REVECO** 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
9.	**WILBERT UICAB** 33-5-1 (18 KOs)
10.	**EDGAR SOSA** 43-7-0 (26 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**ADRIAN HERNANDEZ** 22-1-1 (14 KOs)
2.	**GILBERTO KEB BAAS** 35-21-4 (22 KOs)
3.	**OMAR NINO** 30-4-2 (12 KOs)
4.	**IVAN CALDERON** 34-2-1 (6 KOs)
5.	**ULISES SOLIS** 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
6.	**ROMAN GONZALEZ** 30-0-0 (25 KOs)
7.	**LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE** 49-10-2 (18 KOs)
8.	**DONNIE NIETES** 29-1-3 (16 KOs)
9.	**MASAYUKI KURODA** 20-3-0 (13 KOs)
10.	**RYO MIYAZAKI** 15-0-3 (9 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**NKOSINATHI JOYI** 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
2.	**KAZUTO IOKA** 8-0-0 (5 KOs)
3.	**MOISES FUENTES** 14-1-0 (6 KOs)
4.	**RAUL GARCIA** 30-2-1 (18 KOs)
5.	**JUAN PALACIOS** 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6.	**WANHENG MENAYOTHIN** 18-0-0 (5 KOs)
7.	**DENVER CUELLO** 29-4-6 (19 KOs)
8.	**KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** 24-4-0 (10 KOs)
9.	**FLORANTE CONDES** 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
10.	**PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK** 23-3-1 (16 KOs)

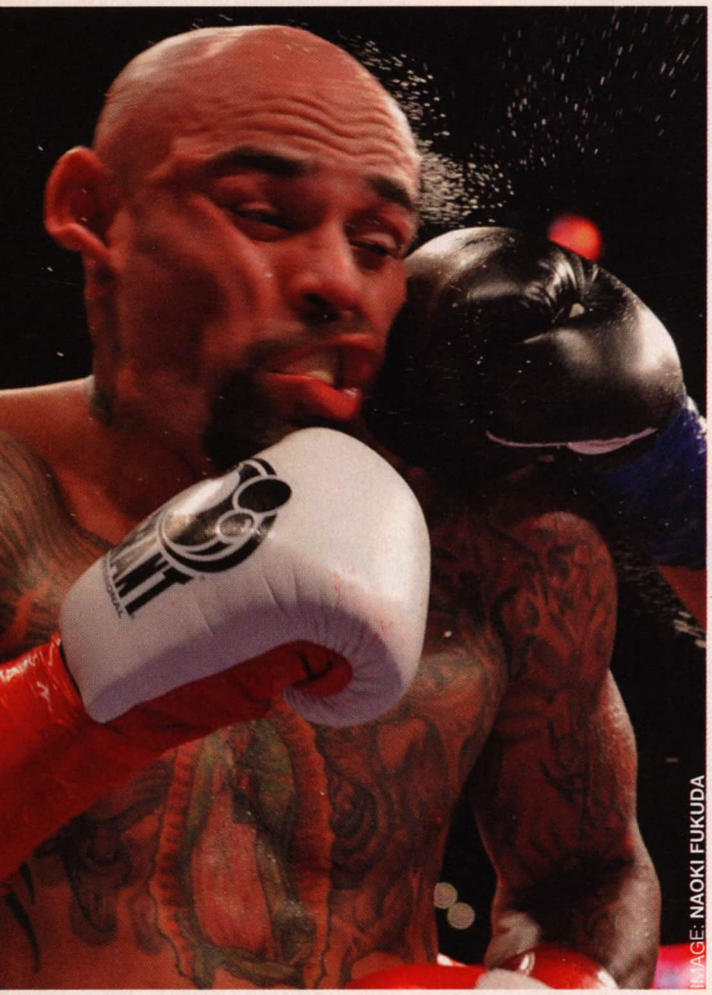


IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

QUIT OR FIGHT

NEW HEAD-INJURY STUDIES COULD HELP FIGHTERS DECIDE HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

WORDS: **NORM FRAUENHEIM**

Head injuries generate studies, create agendas, keep lawyers employed, anger promoters, exasperate scientists and frustrate physicians. It's like listening to the endless debate about climate change. Lots of opinions, but few solutions for the only thing that most of us know for sure: Long after the cheers and concussions, too many fighters are forgotten and left alone in the terrifying dark about what happened to their ability to cope, and to understand.

Boxing has been collecting the anecdotal evidence for almost as long as there has been a willingness to take the risk. You hear the slurred speech. But knowing exactly what caused that thick tongue has been elusive. Mostly, we're left with nothing but those anecdotes.

Joe Frazier provided one 15 years ago that still rings true for many who have witnessed Muhammad Ali's brave and painful struggle with Parkinson's. Frazier was honored in 1996 at a United States Olympic Committee luncheon in Indianapolis during swimming trials for the Atlanta Games. He was there on March 8, the 25th anniversary of his legendary victory over Ali at Madison Square Garden in 1971.

While the lunch crowd watched black-and-white footage of the 15-round decision, a reporter asked Frazier about Ali's condition. Frazier pointed at the screen.

"See that right hand," Frazier said just as his wicked right connected once and then again. "That's what's wrong with him."

Ali's physicians say Parkinson's, but Frazier said what the public still thinks.

The public sees punches.

"That's because he's a celebrity," said Washington D.C. neurologist Dr. John Stiller, a plain-spoken physician and a ringside doctor for the Maryland State Athletic Commission, who says the boxing link would be in the public diagnosis for just about any other ex-fighter with the same symptoms. "Look up dementia pugilistica. The first thing you're going to read about is Parkinsonism."

These days, it's also the first thing you hear about, often from ex-fighters. Famed trainer Freddie Roach, a super-featherweight and lightweight from 1978 through 1986, blames his Parkinson's on punches he absorbed long after he should have taken his last. Former junior-middleweight great Terry Norris is another.

"I fought my last two or three fights with Parkinson's syndrome," said Norris, who lost his last three fights in a 12-year career that ended in 1998 when Las Vegas neurologist Dr. Margaret Goodman, then of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, said no to his application for a license-renewal.

Thirteen years later, Norris thanks Dr. Goodman.

"She saved my life," he said.

Yet after more than a decade, confusion about

whether to quit or fight on, whether to license or deny, continues. To wit: Jermain Taylor was granted a license by Nevada in September, two years after the super-middleweight suffered a brain bleed in a knockout loss to Arthur Abraham.

Do not try to connect the dots. There is no explanation as to why Norris was not licensed and Taylor was. There's just the same old jagged puzzle full of legal briefs, second opinions, skepticism, allegations and speculation. But there are a couple of studies that are attempting to find the missing pieces.

Dr. Stiller has one, which has been underway since 2003. Another one, sponsored by the Cleveland Clinic and conducted by neurologist Dr. Charles Bernick, has been underway since April at the clinic's Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas.

Stiller has been evaluating about 230 boxers at weigh-ins with a cognitive test, a 15-minute exam which measures balance and smell, among other things. Imbalance is one sign of a potential brain disease later in life. Impaired smell is another. A sign of possible trouble is there when a fighter can't detect the difference between flowers and turpentine, says Stiller, a passionate defender of boxing in the often heated debate with those in the medical profession who want it abolished.

Bernick, a newcomer to boxing, began work on a project funded by a grant of more than $400,000 from billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's Lincy Foundation and expects it to last four years. With help from the Nevada Commission and encouragement from major promoters, Bernick said 90 pros, both from boxing and mixed martial arts, agreed to participate during the first six months. Bernick hopes the number grows to at least 500.

"We're happy," he said. "We're ahead of schedule in terms of just recruitment – how many we expected to be enrolled. After a little over six months, we had over 90 enrolled. We're on track. The thought was that we'd get about 150 per year."

The project includes four annual MRI scans of the brain. There are also cognitive tests, speech exams and blood testing. An initial report, labeled "a cross-sectional view," is scheduled for February.

"A snapshot," Bernick said. "The payoff, if you will, would be the annual exam to see how each individual changes."

In part, the hope is to provide the various state commissions with a more reliable set of guidelines. Without taking sides in the inevitable controversy over the Taylor licensing, Bernick called it an example of the dilemma that has confronted commissions for about as long as anybody can remember.

"A situation like that shows where the deficiencies are," he said. "What does a commission have to go on? We can show them the scan. But at the moment, how do they make their decision? Problem is, there's nothing objective. It's kind of a judgment call.'

The missing piece is – always has been – a proven link between concussive blows and dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

"How do you assess concussions?" Bernick asks. "That's what's missing. How do you get from concussions, blows to the head, to chronic diseases? Why do some people run into trouble and some don't?"

Over the long term, Bernick hopes to find out. So, too, does Stiller. Their respective studies differ, however. Stiller has been observing boxers for years. His conclusions are based both on what he sees from them in the ring and during voluntary cognitive tests at the weigh-in. He worries about MRI scans of only professional fighters. Results from a pool limited to one sport could be used by the abolitionists he has always battled, he says.

"Very unfair," said Stiller, who has conducted his study with support from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. "Other sports should be included. Parachutists should be included. They all can suffer concussions. Anybody can."

Goodman says she helped Bernick with the Las Vegas project. She supports it. But she also has concerns.

"I am very much in favor of the study, although I don't know if it will give us the answers we need – or the answers we must hear," said Goodman, who said she helped Bernick design the questionnaire and protocol.

Goodman, like Stiller and others with ringside

MAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

experience, argues that knowing a fighter's record and seeing the bouts in person or on film are critical. Nevada's licensing of Taylor was based in large part on MRIs that showed his brain had healed. Goodman points out that Ali visited the Mayo Clinic for tests that Nevada used to license him for a 1980 loss to Larry Holmes. Ali was cleared to fight, but the bout at Las Vegas' Caesars Palace was symptomatic of how much his health had already declined.

Norris recalls that two different brain scans detected no problems when he asked for a Nevada license for the last time. His speech was slurred, he said, but the scans were normal.

"I could have fought, if not for Dr. Goodman saying no," he said "... And guess what else? I could have fought in any other state. Still could. But never would."

Norris is skeptical of research involving active fighters. He argues it can only be effective if it focuses on those who have retired.

"I don't think this study will help," Norris said. "A fighter could be out from just one blow. One blow is equal to being hit in the head with an 80-pound mallet. I think the money should be spent on a union for the sport. It is inevitable that a pro fighter will have issues in the later years of his life. I can name four or six now who can't talk and don't even know their names. One can't even breathe on his own. I think that should be researched. The problem is that these issues present themselves later in life, not during amateur or pro careers."

Bernick doesn't eliminate the possibility that the research will lead to the kind of study that Norris wants. He foresees other research and possible applications. For example, a mouthpiece is being designed that will measure the velocity and number of punches. There has long been talk that many brain injuries start in the gym while sparring. The high-tech mouthpiece might test the validity of that notion.

"There's a lot of potential spin-off," said Bernick, who said research could eventually help the average patient in the battle against brain disorders.

For boxing, however, the time is now, Goodman says.

Studies at Boston University and elsewhere are underway involving concussions in other sports, especially the National Football League and National Hockey League. There was the recent death of Colts tight end John Mackey, who had dementia reportedly caused by repeated concussions. Thirteen NFL players have donated their brains to the Brain Injury Research Institute. The NFL changed its rules, limiting helmet-to-helmet contact and prohibiting players from leading with their head.

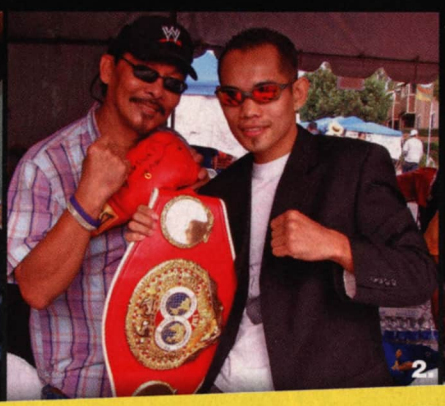
In the NHL, an autopsy found that late enforcer Bob Probert suffered from brain trauma. Derek Boogaard was found dead at 28 years old last summer in his Minneapolis apartment. A brain disorder has been suspected. Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby suffered a concussion in October that affected his balance and raised questions about whether he would retire. Those are just some of the current examples. Could boxing become ground zero for these studies? After all, head blows are fundamental to what the sport is all about.

"I am fearful that the CTE studies could lead to the conclusion that boxing – no matter how much we try to improve regulations – can result in significant brain damage even in the amateurs," Goodman said.

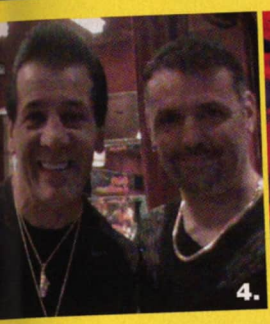
CTE is a medical acronym for Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. Common meaning: punch-drunk syndrome. All signs, even the language, point to a day when the studies will focus on boxing, which has been a lot of things, but never afraid of much. If it confronts this fear and takes ownership of what Dr. Stiller and Dr. Bernick find, it will stake a claim on its future. Only then can it do what it must to fight on. ■

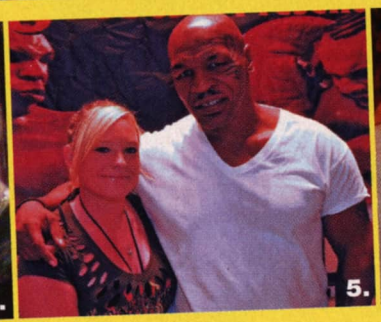
AT THE FIGHTS

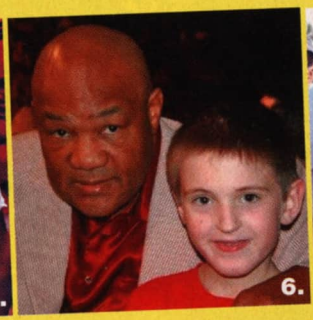
1.

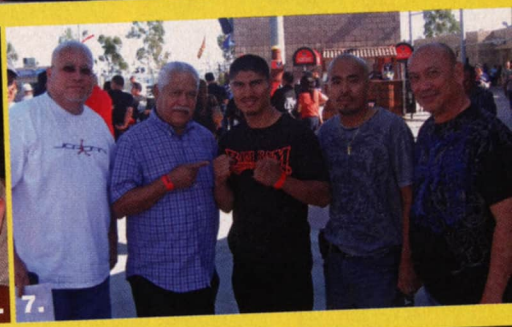

2.

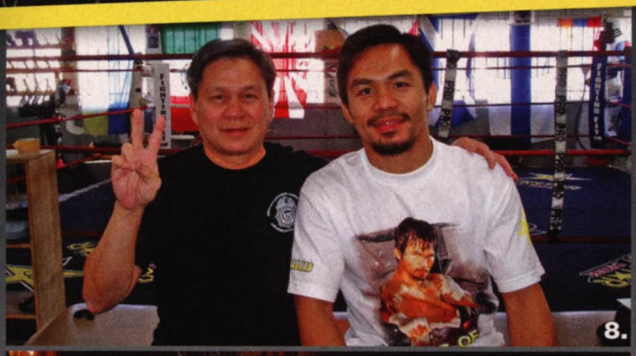
3.

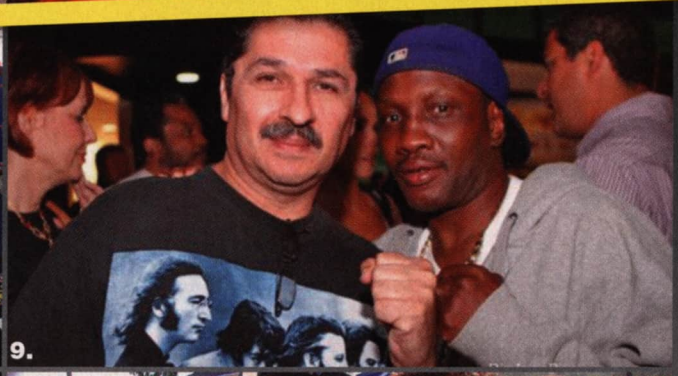

4.

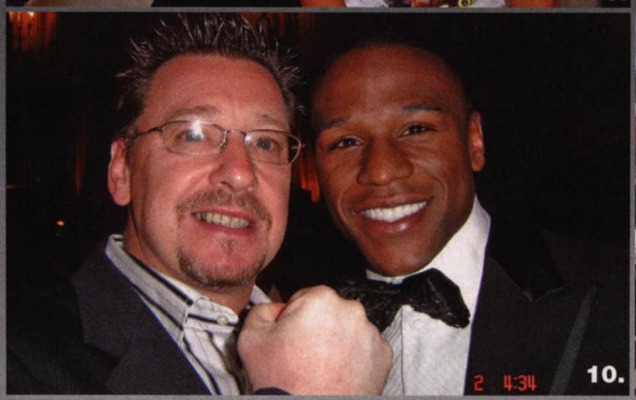

5.

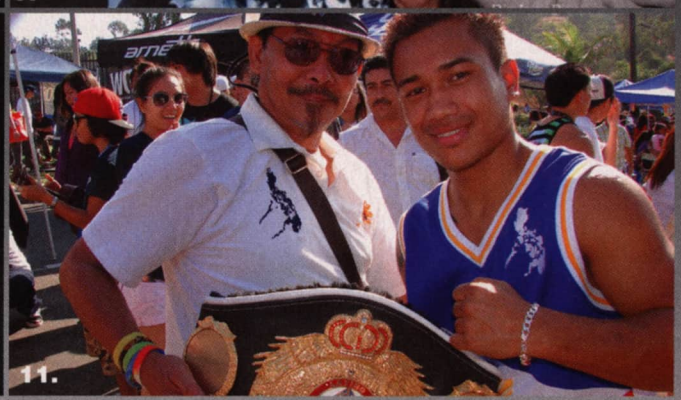

6.


7.


8.


9.


10.


11.

1. Chris Ley with Winky Wright after Pacquiao-Marquez II at the MGM Grand. **2.** Nonito Donaire Jr. with Julian Santos Jr. San Diego **3.** Rick Meunier with Teddy Atlas at Friday Night Fights, Hampton Beach NH **4.** Chuck Zito with Paul Johnson at Mayweather vs Ortiz, Las Vegas **5.** Mike Tyson with Michelle Soar at Mayweather vs Ortiz, Las Vegas **6.** Caleb Alms with George Foreman at the Juan Diaz vs Michael Katsidis fight in Houston **7.** Gabriel Peiz, Glenn De Dios, and Fil Mercado with Eduardo and Mikey Garcia at the Brandon Rios vs Urbano Antillon fight, Carson, Calif. **8.** Jesse Beltran and Manny Pacquiao at Wild Card Boxing Club, Hollywood, Calif. **9.** Sweetpea Pernell Whitaker and Basilio Diaz at the Khan vs Judah press conference in L.A. **10.** Neil McLean with Floyd Mayweather Jr. **11.** Julian Santos Jr. with Mercito Gesta

WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN RING MAGAZINE?

Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!

IMAGE: **HOWARD SCHATZ**

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

THE SUPER SIX TOURNAMENT ENDURED MYRIAD GLITCHES BUT WILL CONCLUDE WITH WHAT MANY HAD HOPED FOR, A COMPELLING SHOWDOWN BETWEEN AN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN

WORDS: **RON BORGES**

Ken Hershman recently left his position as Showtime's senior vice president and general manager for Sport and Event Programming for the bigger budgets of HBO Sports but his legacy will persist on Dec. 17, when WBA super middleweight champion Andre Ward squares off with WBC title holder Carl Froch at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., in the final match of the network's Super Six World Boxing Classic – 26 months and many headaches after it began.

When it all started it was never designed to become the "Super 8" (a format that worked better for Kodak than for Showtime), but in the end it will have accomplished what it set out to do, which in boxing is seldom the case.

It will be a winner-take-all night, with the "all" including the RING magazine belt, which has been long vacant in this division because putting together anything resembling a match between the champion and the recognized top contender had proven to be a harder road to travel than 50 miles of detours.

The Super Six, a tournament-style approach designed to crown a (relatively) undisputed super middleweight champion, was supposed to be long over by now, but injuries, intrigue and ingenuity intervened to drag out the process. Troubled by delays and withdrawals both unavoidable and suspect, it morphed from a six-man into an eight-man tournament with one of the fighters, Glen Johnson, reaching the semi-final despite not being in the original six and having only one fight.

Yet when all is said and done, Showtime's vision of creating one champion out of many has led to what it most hoped to achieve – a confrontation with international implications between the best American super middleweight, 2004 Olympic gold medalist Ward, and the surviving European, England's Froch.

That fight was originally set for Oct. 29 but had to be postponed when Ward was cut in training, so in a sense things will have ended the way they should have – late. Fortunately, neither Showtime nor Hershman were daunted by the problems that plagued the event. If they had been, they would never have revitalized the idea in abbreviated form to crown a bantamweight champion, an event that will be re-visited Dec. 3 when unified champion Abner Mares meets former champion Joseph Agbeko in a rematch of the Aug. 13 Showtime bantamweight tournament final that ended in controversy when Russell Mora did one of the more pathetic jobs of refereeing in recent memory.

Dreams die hard in boxing and that included those in the corporate offices at Showtime, where Hershman and CEO Matt Blank remained steadfast in the belief that the best thing for the sport was to clear out the detritus, beginning with the super middleweight division and later the bantamweights, to give fans a reason to recognize one man as champion.

Imagine, for example, if there was not one Super Bowl annually but four. What would that do to the

popularity – not to mention the understanding – of pro football?

Imagine not one World Series but four, or not one NBA Final but four, each crowning their own champion. Chaos or apathy would rule because in sports, as in nation building, the best motto has always been "out of many one" not the inverse.

Multiple champions have become a growing problem for boxing, confusing fans and making it difficult, if not impossible to follow who the best man is in most weight divisions. Some fighters, like Manny Pacquiao or Floyd Mayweather, Jr., have been able to overcome the inherent confusion and be crowned by the public. But more often than not, multiple champions create doubt and eventually disinterest. If everyone is champion, then nobody is, and it's not a long walk from there to "Who cares who the champion is?"

Hershman realized this and hit upon the idea of the Super Six in part because Showtime had deals with some of the participants, and was thus able to more easily make the necessary matches, ending up with an original lineup that included then-WBA champion Mikkel Kessler, WBC champion Froch, Ward, ex-middleweight champions Arthur Abraham and Jermain Taylor and 2004 Olympic bronze medalist Andre Dirrell. Over time Taylor, Kessler and Dirrell would pull out and be replaced by Johnson and Allan Green, while only two of the fighters involved would actually participate in the promised three fights in the group stage (Froch and Abraham).

Ward ended up putting the WBA title at risk outside the tournament when he fought an opponent not included in the Super Six, Sakio Bika, after Dirrell claimed an injury made him unavailable. Fortunately, Ward won. Meanwhile, Froch first lost the WBC belt to Kessler and then won it back after an eye injury forced Kessler to pull out of the tournament and vacate the championship. The WBC originally named him champion emeritus (which mostly means promotional friend of WBC president Jose Sulaiman) and said it would name the Ward-Dirrell winner its champion, but insisted he then fight the winner of a Froch-Abraham match.

Hershman and Abraham's promoter, Wilfried Sauerland, pressured the WBC into altering its thinking, making the Froch-Abraham winner the WBC champion instead, and thus avoiding another potential problem. Since there was never a Ward-Dirrell fight, what resulted was the best possible result for Showtime: a Ward-Froch final.

Before that happened, however, half the original six had been eliminated by injuries before the preliminary stage ended, leaving the 42-year-old Johnson, an ex-light heavyweight champion named as a last-second replacement for Kessler. He was guaranteed one of the four semi-finalist slots despite having fought only once in the tournament, and that could have made a mockery of the whole idea had he prevailed. To make matters worse, his win was a knockout of Green, who was himself a replacement for Taylor after the twice-ko'd former middleweight champion withdrew.

Confused yet? Try being Hershman.

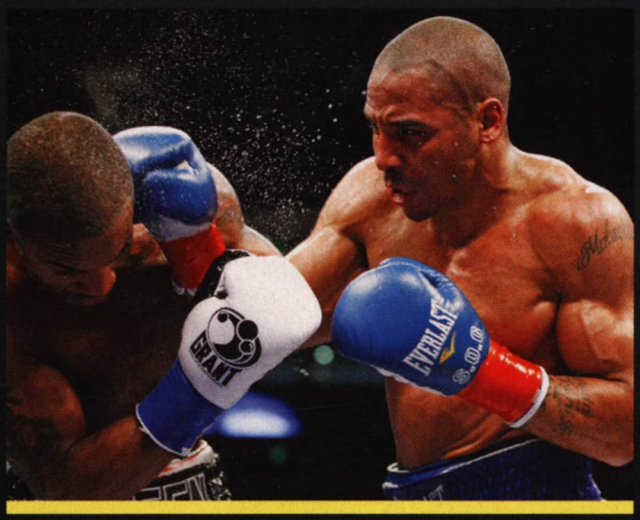
No one would have blamed him for pulling the network's plug at some point and leaving the champion-building to someone else. That he didn't not only led ultimately to Ward-Froch but also spoke to his belief that boxing has to find new ways to go about crowning champions.

"I think when you overlay tournament style rules to this sport it becomes that much more thrilling," Hershman explained before leaving Showtime. "We're trying to be creative and broaden the audience for boxing. One problem in boxing is a fighter comes in, he fights, and then he goes off and disappears for six months. You don't hear from him.

"The principle behind this is how do you keep a fighter in the minds of the fans between fights? One thing we've seen with the Super Six is a tournament format can do that because the conversation is not only about the competing fighters of the moment but what's next for the winner and the loser, and that brings the names of the others involved back into play. That's what happened with the Super Six … although not always in the way we wanted."

At times it looked as if it might never crown anyone, and quite often the endeavor didn't seem worth the effort. But the final fight is nearly here now, and when the winner's hand is raised, it will actually

SUPER SIX
WORLD BOXING CLASSIC
THE SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
The
FINAL
WARD
VS
FROCH
WBA/WBC SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT UNIFICATION CHAMPIONSHIP
SAT DEC 17, 9PM ET PT
CAESARS ATLANTIC CITY
matchroom SPORT
Goossen Tutor PROMOTIONS
SHOWTIME sports



have settled something. Not everything, because Lucien Bute didn't take part, but enough that it might set the stage for the winner to face Bute next year in what one could argue would be the tournament's true crowning moment – even though it technically ends Dec. 17 in Atlantic City.

Froch-Ward will settle most of the division's issues save Bute because few others can forcefully argue their case. Kessler and Abraham certainly had their chances and so did Dirrell. There is always WBO champion Robert Stieglitz (40-2), but who outside his immediate family really believes he's in the top tier? That leaves only Bute with a debatable point and, lo and behold, Showtime wisely signed him to a deal midway through the Super Six in hopes of ending with one universally recognized champion built on their airwaves.

"What Ken has done has thrown away all the questions and politics in boxing," said Eddie Hearn, Froch's manager, during a three-day promotional tour to London, New York and finally Ward's hometown of Oakland, Calif., to promote the final bout. "We have the best fighting the best to reveal the ultimate champion.

"This tournament has revolutionized the sport of boxing. It has taken out the politics of the sport that can hinder big fights and has left the best men in the division to square off."

That was the point all along, and on that level it will have succeeded. Whoever has his hand raised at Boardwalk Hall will have been crowned the old fashioned way – by fighting through a gauntlet of legitimate contenders – while at the same time the event itself was surviving a series of challenges.

"This has been an incredible endeavor and an exasperating one for all of us working behind the scenes," Hershman admitted. "The Super Six has been a tremendous challenge and a tremendous learning experience. It's been frustrating, annoying, exhilarating and exciting. I don't regret it for a minute. Whoever wins these tournaments will have achieved

IMAGE: RENAY JOHNSON / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

WINNERS AND LOSERS

Some of the eight fighters who have taken part in the Super Six World Boxing Classic have benefited greatly. Others haven't. Here's what each accomplished (or didn't) in the tournament.

BIGGEST WINNERS

Andre Ward: Ward was thought by many to be too inexperienced to compete for the tournament championship. Instead, he has remained unbeaten and emerged as a blossoming star.

Carl Froch: Some believed Froch was too crude to succeed in the competition but he proved beyond doubt that he has the goods to beat the best.

Glen Johnson: The invitation to replace Kessler pumped life into Johnson's career, as did his KO of Green. He also gave a good performance in defeat against Froch.

ALSO RANS

Mikkel Kessler: The tournament favorite was taken down early, losing a one-sided fight to Ward in his first fight. He rebounded by beating Froch but then

one of the amazing accomplishments in boxing.

"When Dirrell pulled out (with alleged neurological problems on the eve of a fight with his long-time friend Ward) I did feel like I was down on the canvas. The count was 8, 9 and it would have been nice just to curl up in the fetal position and stay down. But then I thought, 'Look, we've got three of the original six participants in the semi-finals.' So I got up, took a breath and went and said 'Let's do it again!'

"It has delivered thrilling fights and that is what we set out to do. As the tournament progressed we could see Andre Ward and Carl Froch were on a collision course. For this reason alone we're in for a great fight."

That part will be decided by the fighters, but there is no reason to expect anything but a highly competitive match between opponents with enough stylistic differences to provide both fireworks and debate-inducing tactical issues.

"We have a lot of respect for Andre Ward, but I have some bad news for you," Hearn told a pro-Ward group in Oakland. "Carl Froch is not human. He's a machine. Andre Ward says he's been in the trenches, but he's never been in trenches with England's finest. "This is a huge fight for Britain. Carl is now Britain's No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter. He had nothing given to him. He travels and fights away from home on the regular (basis). To defend his (WBC) title, capture the WBA, RING magazine belts and the Super Six Cup would mean everything to a guy who has had to do everything on his own."

One would imagine so, but Ward could make the same claim, if he was the kind of guy to make claims.

Quiet, dignified and deeply religious, Ward was for years an afterthought in boxing circles. This was true in Athens at the Olympics, where little was expected of him yet he became the only American fighter (and the last one) to win a gold medal. It continued into the early stages of the Super Six, when it was widely assumed Kessler would undress him in their opening match.

At that time many believed Ward had simply been included to add a recognizable American name to the mix in a tournament likely to be dominated by more-experienced European champions. But as the tournament progressed, Ward emerged as a star in the making.

He took the WBA title from Kessler on Nov. 21, 2009 and hasn't come close to giving it back, easily outpointing Green, Bika and Abraham. Along the way he has slowly emerged as a fresh face in a sport that badly needs one.

"When I started in this tournament everyone had questions about me," Ward said. "Everyone has doubts. Now there are some people that say I'm the

pulled out with an eye injury.

Andre Dirrell: Dirrell was solid in defeat against Froch in his opener and dominated Abraham for 10-plus rounds. He hasn't fought since because of Abraham's illegal blow.

BIGGEST LOSERS

Arthur Abraham: Abraham entered the tournament as one of the favorites, which was reinforced with his KO of Jermain Taylor. He then lost three straight tournament fights and a lot of respect.

Jermain Taylor: Taylor should never have been in the tournament, having lost three of his previous four fights. Abraham made that clear with a brutal KO.

Allan Green: Green entered the tournament with much bravado; he left it with a whimper. He lost a shutout decision to Ward and was KO'd by Johnson.

favorite but I don't feel that way. I still have a chip on my shoulder.

"I don't know if this tournament and the final would be what it is if it didn't have the bumps in the road. Difficulties make you appreciate things. There were several times I thought (the tournament) was over but then I'd get a call saying we're back on.

"We (both) know why we're here. I expected from the beginning to make it to the final and slowly but surely we made believers out of a lot of people. But I would not call either of us great, Carl nor I. That term is thrown around too loosely today.

"You have to earn that, and that's what I want to do. This is the kind of fight you have to fight and you have to win in order to be considered great."

That Ward views the world in that way is refreshing. He doesn't beat his chest about his greatness. He beats top-rated opponents to establish it.

The same can be said of Froch, who is a bit more surly but just as willing to fight through a string of challengers to reach this moment. Whether he can seize it remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: If he doesn't, it won't be because he doubts himself.

"This has been a fantastic tournament by Showtime," the two-time world champion said. "Some have said it has taken too long or that it's been drawn out, but these fights that were made possible in the Super Six … would not have happened had we not had the tournament. The Final is what a top sport is all about. We have the two best fighters facing off for it all. This is the essence of sport."

Hershman was confident enough in that idea that he tried it again with four of the world's top bantamweights. Having learned that streamlining the tournament idea might be wise, he paired Vic Darchinyan, Yonnhy Perez, Joseph Agbeko and Abner Mares in a two-round event that began last December and ended with Mares winning a decision

UPS AND DOWNS

A SUPER SIX WORLD BOXING CLASSIC TIMELINE

JULY 21, 2009 – Super Six World Boxing Classic, a six-man modified round-round super middleweight tournament, is formally announced at a news conference in New York City. The participants are Mikkel Kessler, Arthur Abraham, Carl Froch, Andre Ward, Jermain Taylor and Andre Dirrell.

OCT. 17, 2009 – The first fights take place, Froch defeating Dirrell by a split decision in England and Arthur Abraham stopping Jermain Taylor in the 12th round in Germany in Group Stage 1.

NOV. 21, 2009 – Ward upsets tournament favorite Kessler by a unanimous decision in Oakland, Calif., Ward's hometown.

JAN. 13, 2010 – Taylor withdraws from the tournament in the wake of his second consecutive knockout loss. "I'm going to take some time off from the sport of boxing," he said.

JAN. 23, 2010 – Showtime announces that Allan Green will replace Taylor. Green will face Ward in a Group Stage 2 fight.

MARCH 27, 2010 – Dirrell thoroughly outboxes Abraham for 10-plus rounds but Abraham knocks him out cold when he's down in the 11th round and is disqualified in Detroit.

APRIL 24, 2010 – Kessler defeats Froch by a close but unanimous decision in front of Kessler's hometown fans in Herning, Denmark.

JUNE 19, 2010 – Ward easily outpoints an overmatched Green in Oakland to run his tournament record to 2-0.

AUG. 25, 2010 – Kessler becomes the second to withdraw from the tournament because of an eye injury. Green is left without an opponent for the time being.

highly disputed because of Mora standing by and doing nothing as the eventual winner repeatedly fouled Agbeko with low blows.

Hershman's original plan was to use six of the world's top bantamweights, but promoter Bob Arum quickly rejected the idea for Nonito Donaire and Fernando Montiel, who he planned to match in a big-money showdown on HBO. Hershman would have preferred a six-man lineup but recognized a four-man, two-round format eliminated many of the long-term problems that bogged down the Super Six. In addition, it was easier for fans to follow because it was as quick and clean as a concussive two-punch combination.

"When we realized we couldn't get the six bantamweights, I thought for a minute maybe we should just do fights and call it a day," Hershman said, "but this was a good opportunity to test this thing again without a long investment of time.

"If it had been another Super Six, I would have had to make my case strongly to my boss about why it had been a positive. To get six top quality fighters to do a single elimination you'd have to overpay everybody and be in a battle with all of them because they'd each be looking for the easiest path to the final.

"When we looked at the various (four-man) configurations, we couldn't figure out where we wanted to go. That, to me, is exactly what you want. You don't go into any of these fights knowing who's going to win, who's not going to win."

As things turned out, they were able to rematch the finalists because the August outcome resulted in not only Mora's demotion by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, but a forced rematch with strong interest, which is how boxing is supposed to work.

Whether this kind of format will survive now that Hershman has moved to HBO remains to be seen, because it was the kind of event more likely to be staged by a scrappy, underfinanced adversary than by an industry giant. Regardless, the Super Six and the Showtime bantamweight tournament accomplished many things, not the least being to remind us that the best way to crown a champion is the old fashioned way: by matching the best fighters against each other and letting them decide. ■

SEPT. 13, 2010 – Froch pulls out of his Group Stage 3 fight against Abraham, scheduled for Oct. 2 in Monte Carlo, because of a back injury. The fight is rescheduled for Nov. 27.

SEPT. 30, 2010 – Light heavyweight Glen Johnson officially replaces Kessler in the tournament. He will face Green in a Group Stage 3 fight.

OCT. 7, 2010 – Dirrell is the third to withdraw from the competition, citing a lingering head injury from his fight with Abraham.

NOV. 6, 2010 – Johnson stops Green in the eighth round in Las Vegas, thus advancing to the semifinals of the tournament.

NOV. 27, 2010 – Froch defeats Abraham by a near-shutout decision in Finland to earn a meeting with Johnson in the semis. Abraham also moves into the semis, against Ward, because of his Group Stage 1 knockout. Ward outpoints Sakio Bika in a fight outside the tournament. He had already clinched a spot in the semis with his two Group Stage victories.

MAY 14, 2011 – Ward dominates Abraham en route to a one-sided decision in Carson, Calif., thus advancing to the tournament championship match against the Froch-Johnson winner.

JUNE 4, 2011 – Froch defeats Johnson be a majority decision in Atlantic City, N.J., to reach the tournament final.

SEPT. 22, 2011 – Ward suffers a cut in training, forcing him to postpone the final fight in the competition. They had been scheduled to meet Oct. 29.

DEC. 17, 2011 – Ward will face Froch for the tournament championship in Atlantic City.

THE CURSE OF THE "0"

HOW THE CULTURE AROUND PERFECT RECORDS HURTS BOXING

WORDS: **GARY ANDREW POOLE**

There is a widespread and ongoing problem in modern boxing: the disproportionate value placed on a perfect record, which can force many of the most talented and exciting fighters into boxing purgatory, and rob boxing fans of the sport's most thrilling fights. There is no other sport in which an "0" is so overly, and comically, emphasized, and none in which it is as detrimental to an athlete's career.

Perfect records are not always a reflection of greatness (is American football star Tom Brady dismissed as a has-been if he throws a couple interceptions and his team loses?), and the three-decade reliance by boxing promoters, matchmakers and television networks on a perfect record goes against the grand traditions of boxing. Rocky Marciano went 49-0, but many of the sport's icons lost several fights and their legacies haven't been diminished because of it: Ray Robinson (173-19-6) ... Willie Pep (229-11-1 65) ... Carmen Basilio (56-16-7) ... Archie Moore (185-23-10) ... and Ray Leonard (36-3-1). In fact, these boxers' ability to bounce back from losses and become better as a result helped turn them into legends.

We don't live in the 1950s or '80s anymore. Prize fighting is a much different game. Elite boxers don't fight nearly as much as they used to. And pay-per-view bouts have changed the economic dynamics of the sport, creating more wealth for upper-echelon boxers but also making boxing into a relatively niche sport, in which 1 million pay-per-view buys is seen as a major accomplishment. Meanwhile, 16 million people will tune in for a regular-season Sunday night football game.

The curse of the "0" is especially troubling to boxing because of the long term impact on the sport: It is helping to create boring fights. This leads to fan apathy and even anger, which was evident during the Nonito Donaire-Omar Narvaez fight in late October, in which the Filipino boxer was so much better than his opponent, and the fight so one-sided and tedious, that fans started chanting expletives.

"Today, it's like the end of the world if someone loses," says Don Chargin, who has been a matchmaker for 60 years, most famously as the matchmaker at the Los Angeles Olympic Auditorium from 1964 to '84, and who now consults for Golden Boy Promotions. "It is a big reason why there aren't as many competitive fights. A fighter loses, and he is doomed."

Ever wonder why fights from years past were so much better, and the boxers so skilled? It's because the fighters were evenly matched and forced to consistently fight strong opponents.

Now matchmakers are so paranoid about their boxer losing that they are inclined to create bouts in which their pugilist has a 60-40 chance of winning, rather than a 50-50 shot, says matchmaker Tom Brown of Goossen Tutor Promotions. (Other matchmakers concur: 60-40 fights have become the norm.) This timidity has become a destructive part of the boxing culture, and matchmakers are frustrated by it.

Part of the problem starts with promoters competing to sign young fighters and then trying to protect their, say, $30,000 investment. Matchmakers derisively call these fighters "bonus babies" because they are tasked with protecting the investment by

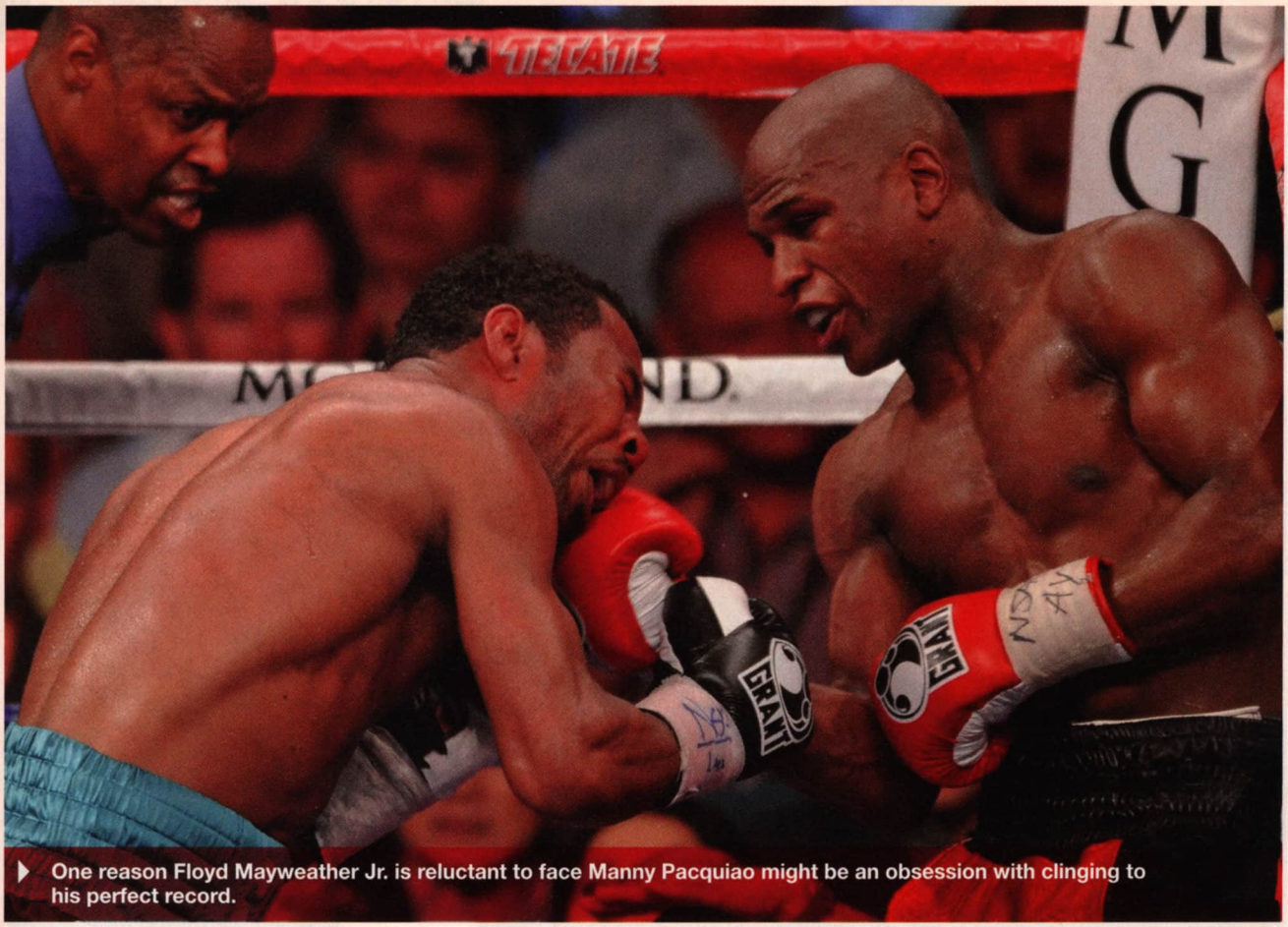


IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

One reason Floyd Mayweather Jr. is reluctant to face Manny Pacquiao might be an obsession with clinging to his perfect record.

"building a fighter," often arranging less competitive fights to pad a record. Of course, young fighters need to build experience and confidence, but often they are pitted against so many patsies that they don't build credible skills. A skilled boxer is usually in line for a title shot around their 20th professional fight, but modern boxers fight so many stiffs that they are rarely ready for it by that time.

Boxing promoters often say the public demands perfect records, but the UFC has proved that the importance of the "0" isn't really that important to fans. Dana White, the UFC impresario, isn't battling an alphabet soup of life-draining sanctioning bodies and competing promoters, so he has the ability to make the best fights possible. He does. Only one of the UFC's current champions has a perfect record and no one seems to care because White creates 50-50 matchups and effectively promotes rematches.

In boxing, competitive rematches and trilogies create gastric acid buildup in the pits of promoters' stomachs. Why? Because they expect a competitive fight, which could lead to a loss. With a loss, the value of the promoter's investment in the boxer will take a nose dive. Rematches just are not as prevalent as they were in the past. For example, Ali (56-5) fought seven rematches while Floyd Mayweather Jr. (42-0) has had one. "We could take some lessons from the UFC in matchmaking," says Chargin.

The fight game has become less rollicking and more risk-averse, resulting in more difficult paths to boxing greatness.

Tom Brown, the matchmaker at Goossen Tutor, cites lightweight John Molina as an example of the problem with the "0." Molina had a bad night on Nov. 28, 2009, when he lost a unanimous decision to Martin Honorio. Molina (23-1 at press time) was considered an excellent young junior lightweight prospect, but the single loss was a severe career setback for the boxer. Molina, 28, has won his last five fights (three of them by KO within three rounds) and he is ranked by THE RING as the ninth best lightweight. But he hasn't seemed to completely regain his earlier momentum and he is not mentioned in the same sentence as a Brandon Rios or Robert

John Molina has won a series of fights after his lone setback – against Martin Honorio in 2009 – but he isn't taken as seriously since he lost the "0" in his record.

IMAGE: RENAY JOHNSON / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Guerrero. Molina might never become part of a big payday fight.

Like any athlete suffering a defeat, a loss by a boxer can be a profound learning experience and make the fighter even better. Manny Pacquiao cites his loss to Erik Morales in 2005 as the impetus to develop his right hand, which has made the Pacman a more complete fighter. While Pacquiao is currently considered the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, many people in boxing, including Floyd Mayweather Jr., knock his three professional losses as proof of his inferiority. Mayweather often cites his own perfect record as a sign of greatness, and his reluctance to truly risk defeat against Pacquiao (and other opponents) is cited as a primary reason that Mayweather and Pacquiao have never met in the ring. Mayweather defines himself by his perfect record and many people in boxing, seeing Mayweather's notoriety and financial success, realize that an "0" is a marketable selling point, but it goes against the very nature of the sport.

People want to see wars, not massacres. ■

Gary Andrew Poole writes for *TIME* and *The Atlantic*. He is the author of *PacMan: Behind the Scenes with Manny Pacquiao (Da Capo)*, which *The Guardian* named one of the best books of 2010. The biography is now out in paperback.

A DYING BREED

WILL ANDRE WARD BE **THE LAST GREAT AMERICAN OLYMPIC CHAMPION?**

WORDS: **DAVE McKEE**

It is no secret that America's Olympic boxing program has fallen from the heights of its Cold War heyday. Complaints of corruption and the introduction of so-called 'computer-scoring' have taken the shine off the Olympic experience and produced a style of boxing that earns the derisive 'fencing with gloves' description. More important, mastery of this style does not translate to professional success.

There was a time when American fans of professional boxing took great pride in their champions. This was partly due to U.S. domination of the heavyweight division, the Cadillac of weight classes. Also, national and ethnic pride, boxing's version of the local sports team brand, is a great inspiration for fans. Until recent decades, this pride was so great in the U.S. that it spilled over into the amateur version of the sport, particularly the Olympics. American amateur fighters took to the Olympic stage as proud warriors for their country, battling their way to the top of the winner's podium and then parlaying Olympic glory into professional paydays. Gold medals were seen as badges of national pride as well as indicators of superlative talent.

Americans have won 48 Olympic gold medals in boxing since the modern inclusion of the sport. (We have had only 47 gold medalists, as Oliver Kirk won gold in both the bantamweight and featherweight divisions in 1904). Fourteen have gone on to noteworthy professional careers. With boxing legends such as Floyd Patterson, Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard among the members of this elite club, American gold flashed at the highest levels of the pro sport on a consistent basis from 1956, when Patterson beat Archie Moore for the world heavyweight title, until a man whose nickname was derived from his Olympic triumph, Oscar De La Hoya, began his reign as welterweight champion in 1997. He did so by defeating Pernell Whitaker, himself a gold medalist at the 1984 Games.

IMAGE: ANDY LYONS / GETTY IMAGES

Andre Ward, pictured here celebrating a victory in the 2004 Olympic Box-Offs, was the first American to win a boxing gold medal since Oscar De La Hoya in 1992. No U.S. boxer won gold in 2008.

De La Hoya won gold fighting as a lightweight in 1992 and was the last American to benefit from the reverse-alchemy that transmuted such success into instant fame and dollars. The only member of Team USA to bring home a gold medal since then was Andre Ward, in 2004, and by all measures his pro career since then has been brilliant; he now stands ready to face Carl Froch on Dec. 17 for the championship of the Super Six World Boxing Classic, as well as the

Andre Ward follows in a long – but dwindling – line of American gold medalists who went on to have success in the professional ranks.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

RING, WBA and WBC super middleweight belts.

Renowned trainer Teddy Atlas, who has trained Olympic athletes, professional champions and commentated on boxing for the last three Summer Games, laments the loss of significance once attached to Olympic glory.

"Gold doesn't matter that much anymore," Atlas said. "Promoters don't care ... fighters don't become household names, because Olympic boxing is no longer shown during prime television slots."

For a sense of how valuable a gold medal once was, one can look as far back as 1957, shortly after Pete Rademacher returned from the 1956 Melbourne Games with a gold disk around his neck and inked a contract for a pro debut against Patterson. In Leonard's 1977 pro debut, he earned $40,000 at a time when Marvelous Marvin Hagler struggled to be noticed with a record of 30-2-1 and 24 KOs, but no Olympic gold.

In recent decades few Americans have won gold medals. Fewer still have followed this success with a great second act as a pro. In the last quarter century, including the 1984 games, at which nine Americans won boxing gold medals (which have to be considered suspect, since the U.S.S.R. and Cuba boycotted the games), only five have had commensurate success as professionals. Of those five, only Whitaker, De La Hoya and Ward can be said to have had truly great careers, and Ward remains a work in progress.

A number of fighters have fallen short of Olympic gold and gone on to excellent championship careers: Evander Holyfield (light heavyweight, bronze, 1984), Roy Jones Jr. (light middleweight, silver, 1988) and Floyd Mayweather, Jr. (featherweight bronze, 1996). Still, it has been fifteen years since Mayweather's amateur peak.

Why do Americans fail to achieve at the Olympics? And why does Olympic success seem increasingly to matter so little in the transition to a professional career? Atlas offers a complex and depressing answer to this question:

He points first to the Olympic boxing competition itself, noting that highly questionable, even corrupt, decisions threatened to derail Olympic boxing altogether. Following Jones' controversial finals loss in 1988, the International Boxing Association (AIBA) instituted "computer scoring" to remedy the impression that judges might favor one boxer over the other due to national ties or other non-boxing related bias. Atlas, commentating at the 1992 games where the computer-scoring system was first used, nearly lost his job at NBC when he announced during the broadcast that the new scoring system was a way for judges to steal the fight "without leaving fingerprints." He points out that the system sounds objective, with the word "computer" in the name, but that it actually provides cover for judges who are inept or wish to give a fight away. Each of five judges has a blue and a red button corresponding to a fighter wearing red or blue gloves and trunks. When a fighter scores a legal punch, the judges are to press the appropriate button. If at least three judges score a punch, it is recorded. Atlas points out that if a judge doesn't like a fighter, all he has to do is "hit the button a little slow."

This scoring system favors fighters who fight in a "narrow defensive style, waiting and pot-shotting," according to Atlas. Open scoring allows fighters to take advantage of an early lead by retreating into a defensive posture and throwing punches only when the losing fighter opens his guard in frustration as he tries to score.

A knockdown, of course, only counts as a single punch.

The style of boxing required to win at the Olympics is replete with habits that will lead to losses in the pros. Add to this the fact that Olympic boxing is no longer shown on Saturday and Sunday afternoons on major networks, and one can see why there is a general lack of respect for the Olympic experience of amateur boxers. Atlas also points to a lack of financial support from USA Boxing, America's national governing body for Olympic boxing. Some winners of this year's Olympic trials in the U.S. are being forced to compete again in the Spring to earn a spot on the American team. This is a baffling process for young boxers who have worked so hard to achieve their dream. In the opinion of Atlas, "USA Boxing should be tossed into the Hudson River."

The apex of American Olympic boxing was 1976, when Leon and Michael Spinks, Sugar Ray Leonard, Howard Davis and Leo Randolph took gold in Montreal. Of the nine who won gold in 1984, only Meldrick Taylor and Whittaker established truly noteworthy pro careers following their Olympic wins. De La Hoya, with title belts in six weight classes and wins over boxing luminaries like Julio Cesar Chavez and Whitaker, set a high standard for future American fighters.

IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Oscar De La Hoya was the last Olympic champion before Andre Ward to parlay his amateur success into a professional windfall.

Twelve years would pass after De La Hoya's Olympic victory before Andre Ward would emerge to repeat the feat.

At the conclusion of Wladimir Klitschko's recent narcoleptic victory over David Haye, former multiple division champion and Olympic silver medalist Roy Jones Jr. called for the rise of an American heavyweight champion to bring interest to the deflated division. Ward fights at a mere 168 pounds, but everything else about him fits the bill for a great American champion.

Atlas portrays the Olympics as both incidental and central to Ward's success as a professional. While the Olympic system, from USA Boxing to the actual tournament, does little to prepare a fighter for pro success, Ward's inherent championship quality and his identity as a winner were solidified there.

"What it meant is that Ward continued up the road he started on a long time ago," Atlas said. "His confidence, his belief in his talent and his spirituality" were all justified in his Olympic victory. "It did not bring him much notoriety, but it did allow for his development."

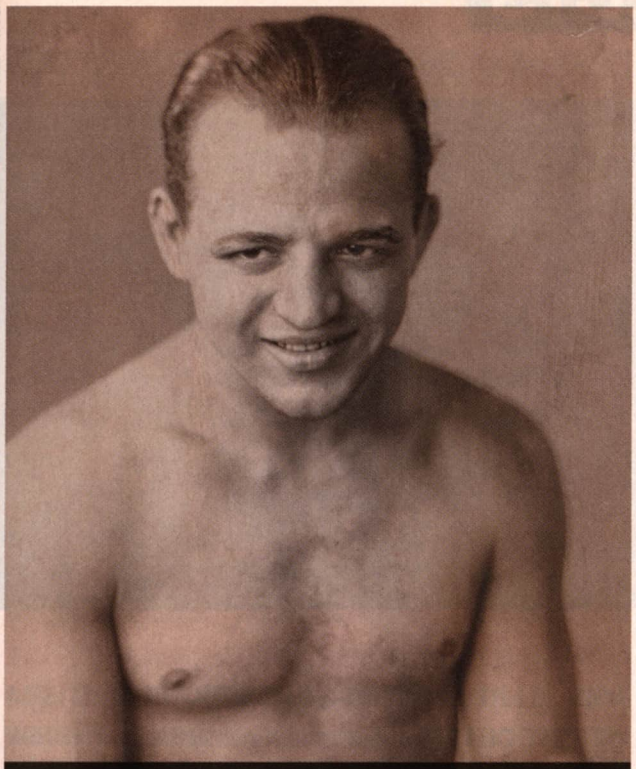
Atlas was the TV analyst for Ward's gold-medal victory. He has been a keen observer of Ward's flawless professional career and feels Ward's upcoming contest with Carl Froch (28-1, 20 knockouts) may be relatively easy.

"Ward is faster than Froch, he said. "He is better than Froch at everything Froch is good at. He's a better boxer. If Froch comes in to bang, he is tough, and can beat him at that game, too."

Atlas points out that Ward (24-0, 13 KOs) is a master of adapting to difficult situations in the ring. Although most American fighters train to fight in a professional style and find the Olympics difficult to handle, "Ward adapted. He is an unselfish fighter. A lot of kids are so selfish they don't seem to know what's right for them. Ward knew he had to adjust to beat guys who were good at exploiting the [Olympic] system. He knew what to let go of. He let go. I saw him do it."

If current trends continue, Ward may be America's last exceptional champion with a golden Olympic pedigree. It seems this is more a result of his own character, drive and talent than anything the Olympic system gave him. Still, though national pride is not much of a factor for the U.S. where Olympic boxing is concerned, perhaps American boxing fans will tune in to cheer on Ward as he represents them against a British fighter who wants to take one more divisional crown across the ocean. ■

IMAGE: THE RING



Frankie Genaro was the first American to win a gold medal in the Olympics. He went on to become world flyweight champion as a professional.

AMERICAN GOLD

NOTEWORTHY OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS WHO SUCCEEDED AS PROS

2004

ANDRE WARD (24-0, 13 KO)
WBA Super Middleweight Champion

1992

OSCAR DE LA HOYA (39-6, 30 KO)
WBO Super Featherweight Champion
WBO & IBF Lightweight Champion
WBC Light Welterweight Champion
WBC Welterweight Champion
WBC & WBA Light Middleweight Champion
WBO Middleweight Champion

1984

PERNELL WHITTAKER (40-4-1, 17 KO)
IBF, WBC & WBA Lightweight Champion
IBF Light Welterweight Champion
WBC Welterweight Champion
WBA Light Middleweight Champion

MELDRICK TAYLOR (38-8-1, 20 KO)
IBF Light Welterweight Champion
WBA Welterweight Champion

1976

LEON SPINKS (26-17-3, 14 KO)
WBA & WBC Heavyweight Champion

MICHAEL SPINKS (31-1, 21 KO)
WBA, WBC & IBF Light Heavyweight Champion
IBF Heavyweight Champion

SUGAR RAY LEONARD (36-3-1, 25 KO)
WBC & WBA Welterweight Champion
WBA Light Middleweight Champion
WBC Middleweight Champion
WBC Super Middleweight Champion
WBC Light Heavyweight Champion

1968

GEORGE FOREMAN (76-5, 68 KO)
WBA Heavyweight Champion
WBC Heavyweight Champion
IBF Heavyweight Champion

1964

JOE FRAZIER (32-4-1, 27 KO)
WBA, WBC & NYSAC
World Heavyweight Champion

1960

CASSIUS CLAY/MUHAMMAD ALI (56-5, 37 KO)
WBA, WBC & NYSAC
World Heavyweight Champion

1952

FLOYD PATTERSON (55-8-1, 40 KO)
NBA & NYSAC World Heavyweight Champion

1924

JACKIE FIELDS (72-9-2, 31 KO)
NBA World Welterweight Champion

1920

FRANKIE GENARO (76-22-8, 17 KO)
NBA & IBU World Flyweight Champion

ON THE CUSP

10 FIGHTERS POISED TO MAKE **MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS IN 2012**

WORDS: **DOUG FISCHER**

Every year a small group of promising young fighters makes the transition from prospect to bona-fide contender.

In 2011, Robert Helenius (heavyweight), Ismayl Sillakh (light heavyweight), George Groves (super middleweight), Danny Garcia (junior welterweight), Mikey Garcia (featherweight), Adrien Broner and his fellow junior lightweights Diego Magdaleno, Eloy Perez and Luis Cruz were among the prospects who earned their way into THE RING Ratings.

These precocious up-and-comers scored impressive victories over quality opponents that established their names among hardcore fans and put the industry on notice that they are nearly ready to fight for major titles.

Who will make breakthroughs in 2012?

The following 10 fighters, who are listed in alphabetical order, are not RING-rated, but they have the look of future title challengers even though they have yet to beat a top contender or fight the 12-round distance (some have yet to go 10 rounds).

They are talented, but still prospects. For now.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

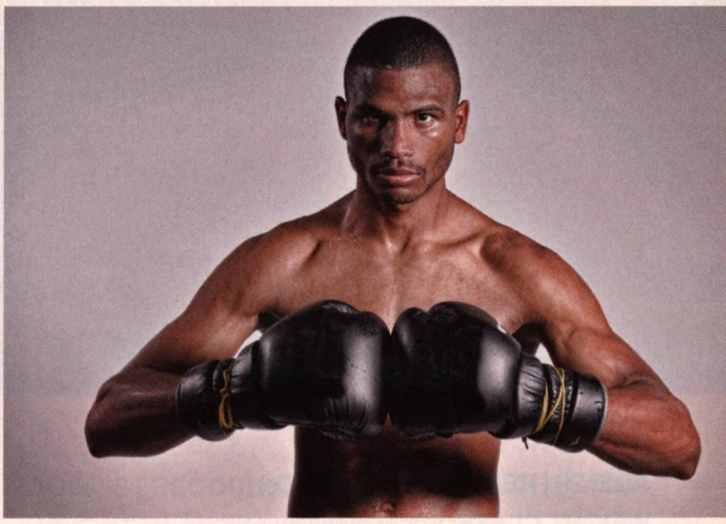
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE

AGE: 23 | **RECORD:** 15-0 (10 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Junior middleweight
REGION: Providence, R.I.

SKINNY: The flashy 6-foot-1 southpaw raised his stature in the sport with strong showings in three consecutive appearances on ESPN2's Friday Night Fights series last year. Andrade outclassed two once-beaten fighters, Alberto Herrera (UD 8) and Omar Bell (TKO 2), before easily out-pointing experienced spoiler Grady Brewer over 10 rounds in August. The 2008 U.S. Olympian's one-sided victory over Brewer, who was coming off a KO victory of undefeated Fernando Guerrero, was both impressive and disappointing. Andrade looked good handling the 40-year-old veteran, but he failed to do so in entertaining fashion. His mission for 2012 is to rekindle the excitement.

STRENGTHS: Extensive amateur background… height, reach and southpaw stance… sharp technique and versatility… excellent hand and foot speed… above average power… bright, affable personality.

WEAKNESSES: Tendency to box safety-first… questionable heart.



SHARIF BOGERE

AGE: 23 | **RECORD:** 21-0 (13 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Lightweight
REGION: Las Vegas (from Uganda)

SKINNY: The good news is that Bogere showed the character of a seasoned pro out-pointing tough veteran Raymundo Beltran over 10 rough-and-tumble rounds with a badly cut eye in May, and then displayed relentless aggression and power en route to scoring a third-round KO of fellow undefeated prospect Francisco Contreras in October. The bad news is that his two ShoBox: The New Generation main events were controversial. Some viewers believed Beltran deserved the nod in their closely contested bout. And fans as well as Showtime's commentators were split on whether his KO of Contreras came from a legit punch or from a blow to the back of the head. If Bogere, who is trained by decorated coach Ken Adams, can consistently combine the guile he used to beat Beltran and the aggression he showed against Contreras, he will transcend the controversy and emerge as a contender in 2012.

STRENGTHS: Athletic ability... good footwork... solid power... willingness to face dangerous opposition... flair for showmanship.

WEAKNESSES: Short for a lightweight (barely standing 5-foot-6)... inconsistent style.

THOMAS DULORME

AGE: 21 | **RECORD:** 13-0 (10 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Welterweight
REGION: Carolina, Puerto Rico

SKINNY: The rangy boxer-puncher recently emerged as one of Puerto Rico's brightest young talents with his 10-round decision over DeMarcus Corley on a Friday Night Fights card in June. Dulorme, who dropped the faded but still capable former 140-pound beltholder in the third round, followed that impressive victory with a nine-round decision over Charlie Jose Navarro in October. Dulorme easily handled Navarro, a 32-year-old Venezuelan veteran who was coming off a close and competitive 12-round decision loss to undefeated WBA welterweight titleholder Viacheslav Senchenko.

STRENGTHS: Excellent technique... poise... power in both hands... height (5-foot-10) and reach... sharp jab, crisp hook and strong body attack... good balance and footwork.

WEAKNESSES: Sometimes neglects his defense by over-committing to offense.

IMAGES: SCOTT FOSTER / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

EDWIN RODRIGUEZ

AGE: 26 | **RECORD:** 20-0 (14 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Super middleweight
REGION: Worcestor, Mass., (from Dominican Republic)

SKINNY: The heavy-handed boxer established his reputation as a top 168-pound prospect while gaining valuable experience in nationally televised 10 rounders against fringe contender Aaron Pryor Jr. and fellow undefeated prospect Will Rosinsky in 2011. Rodriguez patiently walked down Pryor, the 6-foot-4 son of the legendary former junior welterweight champ, out-jabbing his taller opponent while landing straight rights to the body during their ESPN2-televised contest in January. Against Rosinsky, the former two-time national amateur champ adopted a move-and-combination punch strategy to deal with his aggressive foe's pressure during their entertaining Showtime-televised battle. Rodriguez consistently out-landed Rosinsky during their many heated exchanges, obviously impressing the judges with his volume power punching. However, the fight was much closer than the unanimous shut-out cards in Rodriguez's favor suggested. Make no mistake, Rodriguez had to dig deep against Rosinsky. He'll receive even tougher tests in 2012.

STRENGTHS: Ability to adapt... heavy hands... solid chin... durability and physical strength... combination punching... body attack.

WEAKNESSES: Average hand and foot speed... defensive lapses... sometimes neglects technique.

MERCITO GESTA

AGE: 24 | **RECORD:** 23-0-1 (12 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Lightweight
REGION: San Diego (from Philippines)

SKINNY: The southpaw speed demon turned heads during the first half of 2011 by brutally dispatching veteran journeymen Genaro Trazancos and Jorge Pimentel with a flamboyant style that thrilled California fight fans. Gesta followed those knockouts with a 10-round decision over Manuel Perez, a tough and capable journeyman who held WBA lightweight beltholder Brandon Rios to a draw in 2008, in a Fox Sports Net-televised bout in September. Gesta had some difficulty with Perez but generally controlled the fight with his footwork and decided edge in speed. Any prospect from the Philippines with above-average talent is going to attract comparisons to Manny Pacquiao, especially southpaws, but Gesta's style is actually very similar to the fast-and-furious form of the Filipino icon's early years. So Gesta better get used to the comparisons. Luckily for him, he's a much better-than-average talent.

STRENGTHS: Excellent hand and foot speed... powerful left, sharp jab and strong body punching... good footwork... killer instinct.

WEAKNESSES: Sporadic offense... occasional lapses in focus... sometimes waits too much.

IMAGES: ROBERT JAMES HUGHES / CARLOS BAEZ THOMPSON BOXING

LATEEF KAYODE

AGE: 28 | **RECORD:** 18-0 (14 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Cruiserweight
REGION: Los Angeles (from Nigeria)

SKINNY: The good news is that the cruiserweight powerhouse got some much-needed rounds under his belt during three 10-round decision victories against Nicholas Iannuzzi, Matt Godfrey and Felix Cora Jr. in 2011. The bad news is that Kayode's technique was exposed as being rawer than sushi in each ShoBox main event. However, the muscular puncher found a way to win in each fight. His constant pressure impressed the judges more than Iannuzzi's stick-and-move tactics in February. The three knockdowns Kayode scored against Godfrey ensured his points win over the former RING-rated title challenger. And he finally displayed improved form against Cora, at times out-jabbing the experienced southpaw en route to a solid unanimous decision in September. Kayode is rated in the top three by three of the major sanctioning organizations. Is he ready for the holders of those alphabet titles? Probably not, but thanks to his punching power and the experience he gained in 2011, he'll make the most of his challenge.

STRENGTHS: Brute strength... heavy hands... aggressive style... confidence... trained by Freddie Roach.

WEAKNESSES: Sloppy technique... defensive holes... slow feet.

DARLEY PEREZ

AGE: 28 | **RECORD:** 23-0 (18 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Lightweight
REGION: Colombia

SKINNY: The 2008 Olympian spent most of 2011 beating the usual journeymen who pad the records of lightweight up-and-comers -- names like Jose Reyes, Wilson Alcorro and Baudel Cardenas -- but he made a strong statement when he stopped Oscar Meza after six rounds in a ShoBox main event in September. Meza, a 24-year-old pressure fighter from Mexico, had looked good winning three bouts after suffering back-to-back losses to lightweight standouts Gesta and Rios. Meza carried a lot of confidence and aggression into the ring against Perez and even managed to buzz the Colombian early in the fourth round. However, Meza's punch brought the "fighter" out of Perez, who willingly stood his ground and let his hands go for the rest of the round. Perez continued to take the fight to Meza, heaping enough punishment on the tough guy in rounds five and six to prompt his corner to call it off before the start of the seventh. The impressive showing proved that Perez has exceptional will and spirit to go with his considerable skill and ability.

STRENGTHS: Extensive amateur career... maturity... athleticism... quick hands... good timing... excellent footwork... sharp jab... combination punching... body attack.

WEAKNESSES: Questionable chin... desire to mix it up when he doesn't have to.

DAVID PRICE

AGE: 28 | **RECORD:** 11-0 (9 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Heavyweight
REGION: United Kingdom

SKINNY: The 6-foot-8 Liverpool native had been in the shadow of popular UK heavyweight standout Tyson Fury, the current Commonwealth titleholder, despite winning a bronze medal at the 2008 Olympic Games. However, Price earned some much-deserved attention from British fans with three consecutive knockout victories in 2011: a third-round TKO of South African puncher Osborne Machimana in February, a first-round blowout of usually durable American journeyman Raphael Butler in April, and an impressive second-round stoppage of fellow unbeaten prospect and stablemate Tom Dallas in June. Dallas, who carried a 15-0 record into their fight, was a late substitute for veteran John McDermott, who has twice lost to Fury. At press time, Price was scheduled to fight McDermott in an elimination bout for the British title in November. A victory could help set up an eventual showdown between Price and Fury in the near future.

STRENGTHS: Extensive amateur background… maturity… height and reach… educated jab, accurate right hand and good counter hook… high guard… economical punching… solid balance and footwork.

WEAKNESSES: Questionable chin.

GARY RUSSELL JR.

AGE: 23 | **RECORD:** 18-0 (10 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Featherweight
REGION: Capitol Heights, Md.

SKINNY: The highly decorated amateur star carried the reputation as America's most talented prospect into his last bout, an HBO-televised eight-rounder against hard-punching fringe contender Leonilo Miranda, and the super-fast southpaw did not disappoint. Russell easily outclassed and out-pointed Miranda, who brought a 32-3 record with 30 knockouts into the showcase bout in September. The 28-year-old Mexican brawler had given undefeated former Cuban amateur star Luis Franco hell in a 10-round spilt-decision loss in his previous bout, but he literally could not lay a glove on Russell. The bout was rather uneventful thanks to Russell's mastery, which doesn't bode well for his future marketability unless the level of his competition is significantly increased. Luckily for the 2008 U.S. Olympian, there's no shortage of talented young 126-pounders for him to fight, including RING-rated Mikey Garcia and former amateur rivals Ronny Rios and Roberto Marroquin. At press time, Russell was scheduled to make his second HBO appearance underneath the Adrien Broner-Vicente Rodriguez fight in November.

STRENGTHS: Extensive amateur background… elite-level speed and reflexes… punch accuracy… excellent technique… above-average power… southpaw jab and body attack… managed by Al Haymon.

WEAKNESSES: Brittle hands… short and stocky (5-foot-5 with a 61-inch wingspan) even for a featherweight… sometimes gets bored during fights… can be repetitive with his offense.

IMAGES: DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS / GETTY IMAGES / NAOKI FUKUDA

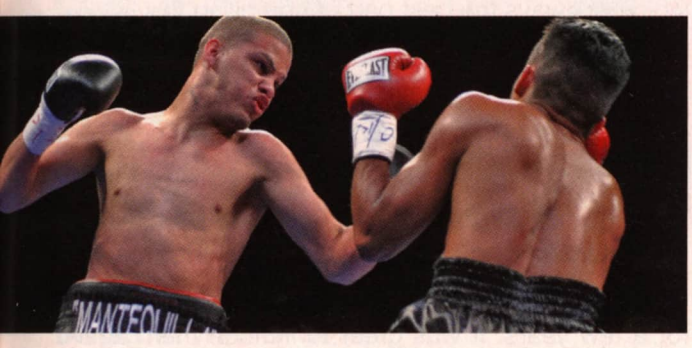
IMAGES: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

JESSIE VARGAS
AGE: 22 | **RECORD:** 17-0 (9 KOs)
WEIGHT CLASS: Junior Welterweight
REGION: Las Vegas

SKINNY: Vargas was known as an all-action fighter, a reputation that was supported by his quickie stoppages of former 140-pound beltholder Vivian Harris in April and veteran spoiler Walter Estrada in July, but his split-decision victory over fringe contender Josesito Lopez proved his versatility and his potential to be a bona-fide contender. Not that his showdown with Lopez wasn't an action fight. The 10-round battle, which was the opening bout of the Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz Pay-Per-View broadcast, stole the show. The two junior welterweights went at it like pitbulls. However, when it became evident that Lopez, a young veteran of 30 pro bouts (29-3), could absorb flush power shots without blinking, Vargas was able to make the necessary adjustments -- mainly employing lateral movement, doubling and tripling the jab and upping his punch output -- in order to edge the Southern Californian on the scorecards. Prior to the Sept. 17 card, Mayweather, who promotes Vargas, told the media that WBA/IBF 140-pound titleholder Amir Khan would have to fight his prospect before the UK star could get a shot at him. Vargas is obviously not ready for Khan, THE RING's No. 1-rated junior welterweight, but it says here that he would give the fighters in the lower top 10 of the magazine's rankings hell.

STRENGTHS: Aggressive nature... ability to box and brawl... above-average power... dedication to training and learning his craft... willingness to challenge himself.

WEAKNESSES: Sometimes overconfident... defensive lapses... tendency to stand and trade.



HONORABLE MENTION

10 more to keep an eye on and ear out for in 2012:

JONATHAN GONZALEZ
14-0 (22 KOs) | Junior Middleweight, Puerto Rico

LUIS ORLANDO DEL VALLE
14-0 (24 KOs) | Featherweight, Puerto Rico

FRANKIE GAVIN
12-0 (26 KOs) | Welterweight, UK

TOMOKI KAMEDA
20-0 (20 KOs) | Bantamweight, Japan

MATVEY KOROBOV
16-0 (28 KOs) | Middleweight, Russia

VERNON PARIS
25-0 (23 KOs) | Junior Welterweight, USA

MARCO ANTONIO PERIBAN
15-0 (10 KOs) | Super Middle, Mexico

LUIS RAMOS JR.
20-0 (23 KOs) | Lightweight, USA

LEO SANTA CRUZ
17-0-1 (23 KOs) | Bantamweight, USA

RAYMOND SERRANO
17-0 (22 KOs) | Welterweight, USA

The RING 100

RANKING THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY**

Newspapers that run daily horoscopes usually print a tiny disclaimer at the bottom of the page, something along the lines of "These horoscopes are purely for entertainment purposes." That's so the readers don't start making life decisions based on the forecasts of some stargazer.

In a way, THE RING 100 should come with a similar disclaimer.

You are about to read a list (or at least look at the pictures) of the fighters we regard as the 100 best at this particular point in time. While we wouldn't imply that our list for 2011 was compiled with any sort of scientific formula behind it, we didn't exactly just sit down with a bag of chips and jot down a bunch of names, either. THE RING 100, after all, is a tradition going back 16 years. Basically, the first 20 or so fighters were fairly easy; the rest of the list was a train wreck we scrupulously sorted out, pulling the damaged cars apart to inspect what we had before starting again. No matter how far we got, there always seemed to be one more Japanese flyweight to consider (and they are always 19-1, they've always lost their most-recent fight, and we can only see them on jerky YouTube clips.)

Still, we carried on.

First, we considered the sort of year a fighter had had since our previous list. If it was a great year, he landed pretty high. If it was an absolutely terrible year, or was marked by inactivity, we lowered his ranking or dropped him completely. Arthur Abraham, Joshua Clottey and a handful of others are gone. But their absences made room for bright new competitors, which is always the best part of compiling this list.

There are also some familiar names here. A few, we'll admit, seem to have been grandfathered in just out of respect for their many years of service. You'll recognize them and you'll say, yes, indeed, the list wouldn't feel proper without them. Better still were the veterans who seemed to reignite their careers recently, leaping back onto the list after being gone for a few years. It was great to include them again, and hopefully their names will make you smile.

Will the list satisfy everybody? No. But we think we did a good job. Maybe you're outraged that Moruti Mthalane didn't make the cut, or maybe you would have preferred a different Polish cruiserweight in a certain spot, but there's always next year.

(Our rankings are based on results for the period ending Oct. 15, 2011.)

IMAGE: NAOKI KUKUDA

1. MANNY PACQUIAO

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT

RECORD: 53-3-2 (38)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 1

STATUS REPORT: Since our last Ring 100, Pacquiao dominated Antonio Margarito (W 12), and then spent 12 rounds chasing a surprisingly reluctant Shane Mosley (W 12). As Pacquiao enters his mid 30s and his extra-curricular activities mount, it wouldn't surprise us if he has only a few more fights left. Pacquiao was due to face old rival Juan Manuel Marquez on Nov. 12, a matchup that should've provided an accurate gauge of where the mighty Pacquiao stands these days.

FUTURE: The line of potential opponents is long. Timothy Bradley might be at the front. If not Bradley, don't discount Miguel Cotto, provided he is victorious in his December rematch with Antonio Margarito. Cotto may be fighting at 154 these days, but trust us, if a rejuvenated Cotto destroys Margarito, there could be enough money in Pacquiao-Cotto II to make Bob Arum forget Floyd Mayweather for another year.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

2. FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

DIVISION: WBC WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 42-0-0 (26)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 2
STATUS REPORT: Maybe if he fought more often he'd be No. 1, but Mayweather will have to be content with a No. 2 ranking. Of course, he'd probably scream at us and say we don't know @&*# about boxing. Then he'd cry. Then he'd laugh. Then he'd send us some really hateful Tweets. But even if Floyd is a bit like that bitter, bipolar ex-girlfriend we can't get rid of, his fourth-round knockout of Victor Ortiz showed that even at age 34, with more money than he knows what to do with, Mayweather is still hungry and mean.
FUTURE: If he doesn't spontaneously combust during another shouting match with his father or Larry Merchant, he may actually get around to fighting again. Since Golden Boy Promotions has co-promoted five of his fights in a row, there may be something to the Amir Khan talk that we've been hearing.

3. SERGIO MARTINEZ

DIVISION: WORLD MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION
RECORD: 48-2-2 (27)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 6
STATUS REPORT: Martinez, the sport's biggest breath of fresh air in a long time, has been impressive since last year's list, destroying Paul Williams (KO 2) Serhiy Dzinziruk (KO 8), and Darren Barker (KO 11). Even though he seemed a little off his game against Barker, he was still more entertaining than 90 percent of the fighters we've had to watch in recent years. The combined record of Martinez's last four opponents is 135-2, which tempts us to rate him even higher, but it's rather crowded at this end.
FUTURE: He has said recently that he was willing to drop weight to meet Manny Pacquiao, but we wouldn't mind seeing him against the winner of the Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito bout.

IMAGE: NAOKI KUKUDA

4. NONITO DONAIRE

DIVISION: WBC/WBO BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 27-1-0 (18)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 4

STATUS REPORT: Donaire has become one of this era's must-see fighters. His left hook may be the best single punch in the sport right now, and his willingness to take on the best is admirable. An easy stoppage of the venerated Fernando Montiel (KO 2) was the highlight of his year. Montiel was supposed to be a serious test for Donaire, but it's hard to test a fighter when your mouth is on the canvas. Donaire defeated junior bantamweight titleholder Omar Narvaez by a shutout decision on Oct. 22.

FUTURE: Donaire plans to rise in weight and take on the likes of Juan Manuel Lopez or Yuriorkis Gamboa. There is also talk of Donaire facing Jorge Arce or Vic Darchinyan, the fighter he KO'd so spectacularly in 2007, or Japanese sensation Toshiaki Nishioka .

5. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

DIVISION: WORLD LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION

RECORD: 53-5-1 (39)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 3

STATUS REPORT: Even though he's 38, Marquez is still a sharp counter puncher with a tenacious personality. A rather unconvincing tune-up a few months ago against Likar Ramos (KO 1) didn't show us much, but his previous bout with Michael Katsidis (KO 9) showed us two things: Marquez is still getting dropped, and he's still able to recover and beat you up. He was due to face rival Manny Pacquiao, which should've provided further information on how much he has left.

FUTURE: Regardless of how he fared against Pacquiao, he'll still be too good for most opponents, and he's still bound for Canastota.

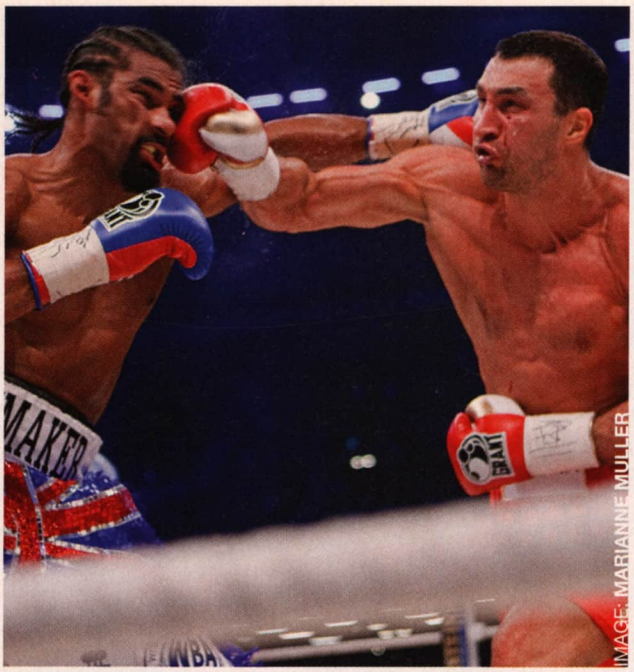


IMAGE: MARIANNE MULLER

6. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

DIVISION: WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION
RECORD: 56-3-0 (49)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 9
STATUS REPORT: With an easy win over David Haye (W 12), Klitschko proved again that he is simply too big and too talented for the current batch of heavyweights. Unfortunately, the bout was dull, as many of Klitschko's recent bouts have been. It's a good thing European fans are less bloodthirsty than us Americans. Otherwise, "Dr. Steel Hammer" would be practicing sports medicine in Botswana by now. Still, he deserves credit for beating everyone put in front of him these past several years.
FUTURE: Klitschko will face former cruiserweight titleholder Jean Marc Mormeck on Dec. 10 in Düsseldorf, Germany.

7. TIMOTHY BRADLEY

DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 27-0-0 (11)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 10
STATUS REPORT: His only bout in 2011 was a dull decision win over Devon Alexander, and then he priced his way out of a bout with Amir Khan. Of course, since Alexander was an undefeated titleholder, we have to give Bradley his due. He's a hard little man and will be difficult for anyone to beat.
FUTURE: He was due to fight 40-year-old Joel Casamayor on the undercard of Pacquiao-Marquez III on Nov. 12.

8. PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM

DIVISION: RING FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION
RECORD: 82-3-1 (45)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 7
STATUS REPORT: It's hard to argue with living legend status, even if Wonjongkam isn't known outside of Thailand. He has won six bouts since last year's RING 100, and while his opponents couldn't be called stiff competition, his work schedule is admirable. He is coming off a one-sided decision over veteran Edgar Sosa on Oct. 21.
FUTURE: There will probably be a few more bouts in Thailand, promoted as the country's last chance to see this aging flyweight icon.

9. GIOVANI SEGURA

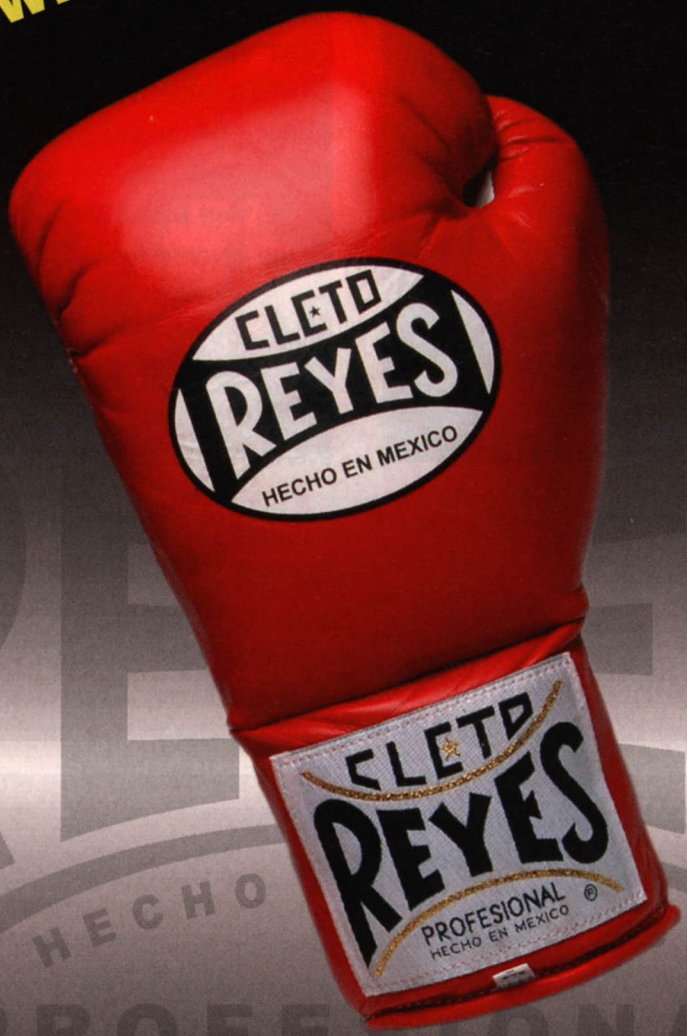
DIVISION: FLYWEIGHT
RECORD: 28-1-1 (24)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 25
STATUS REPORT: Segura is in the process of fighting his way off of obscure pay-per-views and becoming a more-visible figure. Recent wins over Eddy Zuniga (KO 1), Manuel Vargas (KO 7), and a second win over Ivan Calderon (KO 3) were impressive enough, but he has mentioned moving up to 112 where bigger names exist.
FUTURE: Former titleholder Brian Viloria has been mentioned as a possible opponent.

NOW!!!
IN OUR
NEW SHOWROOM!

1808 N NATIONAL STREET
ANAHEIM, CA 92801

FROM MEXICO WITH GLOVE!

Los Guantes de los Campeones



Visit us in L.A. & Hollywood...

WAREHOUSE:
1808 N National St,
Anaheim, CA 92801

Phone: (619) 863 4557

CLETO REYES CORNER:
7769 Melrose Ave,
Los Angeles, CA 90046

www.cletoreyes.com

ventas@cletoreyes.com | cletoreyesmex | Facebook/cletoreyesusa | cletoreyesusa

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE AND SHOWROOM IN MEXICO CITY
Wagner No. 289 Col. Vallejo 07870 México, D.F. Tel. (52 55) 5517 8301

Official Dealer
CLETO REYES
HECHO EN MEXICO
USA - CANADA 2011

Lockwood's Industries - De la Barracuda Boxing Club - Ringside - Hatashita International
Pro Boxing Supplies - Fighters Focus - Bound Boxing - Grupo HAMD - Real KO Boxing Club
Deportes Prieto - MMA Industries - ivg Stores - Blackeye Athletics - Fight Shop - DBS Products

IMAGE: CRAIG BENNETT / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

10. ANDRE WARD

DIVISION: WBA SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 24-0-0 (13)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 20

STATUS REPORT: He may not be as riveting as some of the other fighters on our list, but that's OK. He wins fights. In 2011 he easily beat Arthur Abraham (W 12) and Sakio Bika (W 12), maintaining his spot as the favorite to win Showtime's Super Six World Boxing Classic. If you have to be all steak and no sizzle, you may as well do it the way Ward does it.

FUTURE: Ward suffered a cut while training for his scheduled bout with Carl Froch, postponing the event until Dec. 17.

11. BERNARD HOPKINS

DIVISION: RING AND WBC LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 52-6-2 (32)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 26

STATUS REPORT: Hopkins' bizarre second-round loss to Chad Dawson on Oct. 15 – in which Hopkins dislocated his shoulder and couldn't continue – could become a no-contest when California rules on a protest. In other words, the fight proved nothing. Hopkins' ranking here is based on his two exciting bouts with Jean Pascal (D 12, W 12). Hopkins is 46 and near retirement but it's difficult to believe that he would allow his career to end on such a sour note. He'll be back.

FUTURE: A rematch with Dawson would be appropriate.

12. VITALI KLITSCHKO

DIVISION: WBC HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 43-2-0 (40)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 13

STATUS REPORT: The elder Klitschko's combination of intimidating size, decent power and considerable ring smarts is too much for today's heavyweights. Like his brother, he's dominant. Unlike Wlad, Vitali is a tad more aggressive, therefore his bouts are a little more fun to watch. His bout with Odlanier Solis was a bust (KO 1), but his win over Tomasz Adamek (KO 10) was as decisive as any win he's had in his career.

FUTURE: Too bad he's 40 and missed a large chunk of his career with injuries and political goals. There's not much left for him to do, although there is a rumor he may fight David Haye to secure the knockout Wladimir couldn't get. What are big brothers for?

13. MIGUEL COTTO

DIVISION: WBA JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 36-2-0 (29)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 11

STATUS REPORT: OK, he won a fight and he's rated lower than last year. Beating Ricardo Mayorga (KO 11), the favorite punching bag of all fighters on the comeback trail, wasn't going to rocket Cotto into the Top 10. Cotto is still a gallant competitor, though, and not far removed from his prime.

FUTURE: His Dec. 3 bout with Antonio Margarito is a key fight for him. Lots will be settled that night. If he wins, don't be at all surprised if Top Rank tries to sell us a Pacquiao-Cotto sequel.

IMAGE: EMILY HARNEY / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

14. CARL FROCH

DIVISION: WBC SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 28-1-0 (20)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 33

STATUS REPORT: Froch gritted his teeth and battled his way to the Showtime tournament final. Wins over Glen Johnson (W 12) and Arthur Abraham (W 12) cemented it for him. He's never dull and never takes a backward step. He's pretty good on the mic, too. He may have created a new genre – the gentleman trash talker.

FUTURE: Win or lose against Andre Ward in the Super Six final, we want more Froch. Our fear is that he returns to England and forgets the U.S.

15. LUCIAN BUTE

DIVISION: IBF SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 29-0-0 (24)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 17

STATUS REPORT: The Bute express train keeps a-rolling, partly because he has augmented his clever boxing style with a wicked body attack. Brian Magee (KO 9), and Jean Paul Mendy (KO 4) gave him no problems at all in 2011.

FUTURE: Bute was due to face cagey old Glen Johnson on Nov. 5. After that, there are lots of good fighters in his weight range, including Mikkel Kessler, Carl Froch and Andre Ward.

16. AMIR KHAN

DIVISION: WBA/IBF JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

RECORD: 26-1-0 (18)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 28

STATUS REPORT: Khan is beginning to live up to the potential we all thought he had. He's quick, and can hit hard. His defense has improved, too. Since last year, he won a grueling contest with Marcos Maidana (W 12) and then routed Zab Judah (KO 5). In between was a less spectacular win over Paul McCloskey (W Tech. Dec. 6). Hey, they can't all be masterpieces. Still, he did enough to crash our Top 20.

FUTURE: Timothy Bradley balked in 2011, but we'd still like to see that one. In the meantime, Khan is scheduled to face Lamont Peterson on Dec. 10.

17. YURIORKIS GAMBOA

DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT

RECORD: 21-0-0 (16)

LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 24

STATUS REPORT: Gamboa alternates between looking spectacular and workmanlike. He continued that trend recently, stopping Jorge Solis in dramatic fashion (KO 4) and then putting in a measured effort to beat Daniel Ponce De Leon (W Tech Dec. 8).

FUTURE: Bouts with Juan Manuel Lopez, or Mikey Garcia sound mighty good. He's also talking about moving up to 130.

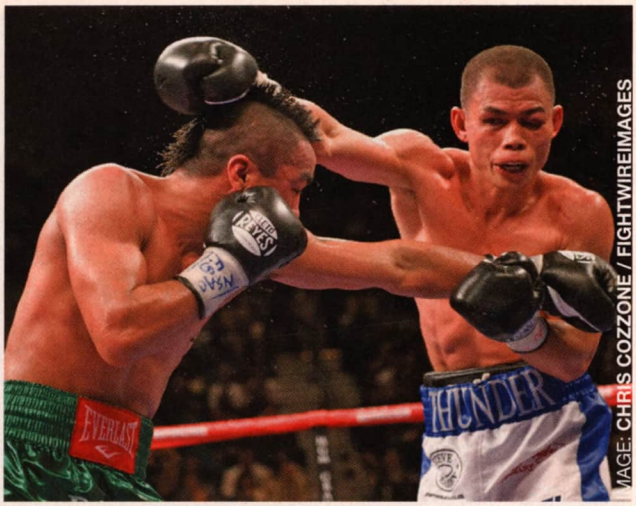


IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

18. CHRIS JOHN

DIVISION: WBA FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 45-0-2 (22)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 18
STATUS REPORT: After a long layoff with a rib injury, John was victorious twice since 2010, beating Fernando Saucedo (W 12) and Daud Yordan (W 12). He's a fluid boxer with great movement and ring generalship, a joy to watch for purists.
FUTURE: He's getting older, so he'll have a few more fights in Indonesia and call it a day, retiring as a legend of sorts. He is scheduled for a December title defense against Satoshi Hosono.

19. BRANDON RIOS

DIVISION: WBA LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 28-0-1 (21)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 83
STATUS REPORT: Three big wins since 2010 moved "Bam Bam" into our upper echelon, climaxing with his shootout stoppage of Urbano Antillon (KO 3). He also scored a dramatic win over Miguel Acosta (KO 10) for the WBA lightweight belt. He's one of the few fighters working today who fights like he's actually trying to earn his money.
FUTURE: Rios will face Englishman John Murray on the undercard of Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito II on Dec. 3.

20. FERNANDO MONTIEL

DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 46-3-2 (36)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 8
STATUS REPORT: After blasting out Jovanny Soto (KO 3), Montiel found himself blasted out by Nonito Donaire (KO by 2). Picking up the pieces of what had been a skyrocketing career, Montiel moved up to super bantamweight and scored a couple of easy wins in Mexico over Nehomer Cermeno (KO 3) and Alvaro Perez (KO 3). He's still one of the best little men in boxing. He just had the misfortune of running into the best left hook in the biz.
FUTURE: Montiel, 32, is a pro's pro. He'll do something good.

21. CHAD DAWSON

DIVISION: LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
RECORD: 31-1-0 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 21
STATUS REPORT: We'll never know how his fight against Hopkins would've played out but Dawson looked sharp for one-plus rounds. He is a skillful, gifted fighter, as he demonstrated when he boxed his way to a win over tough Adrian Diaconu (W 12). When he puts his punches together, he's actually entertaining. He doesn't always do it, though, and his fights can take a turn for the dull. He's also going through trainers like old hand wraps, going from Eddie Mustafa Muhammad to Emanuel Steward to John Scully and Winky Wright. That may just be business, or it could be a sign that something isn't right in Dawson's world.
FUTURE: Dawson opened talks with Jean Pascal immediately after the Hopkins fight. Pascal took Dawson's title in 2010. And, of course, Dawson could face Hopkins in a rematch.

Stands up to the job.™

Weighs 2.2 lbs so you can work all day without feeling it.

Sinks 207 2[1/2]" drywall screws on a single charge.

3 LED lights provide visibility without shadows.

GUARANTEED TOUGH® with the features your jobsite demands.

The New 12V MAX* Lithium Ion System

DEWALT

visit www.dewalt.com/12VMAX

*Maximum initial battery pack voltage (measured without a workload) is 12 volts. Measured under a workload, nominal voltage is 10.8.

Copyright © 2010 DEWALT. The following are examples of trademarks for one or more DEWALT Power Tools and Accessories: The yellow and black color scheme; the "D" – shaped air intake grill; the array of pyramids on the handgrip; the kit box configuration; and the array of lozenge-shaped humps on the surface of the tool.

22. CELESTINO CABALLERO

DIVISION: WBA FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 35-4-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 12
STATUS REPORT: Caballero avenged his loss to Victor Barros by easily outpointing the Argentine on Oct. 14 to regain the WBA title, which snapped a losing streak at two. He lost split decisions to Jason Litzau in November 2010 and Barros in July. The fact those fight were close and he bounced back with the victory kept him in the top quarter of the RING 100. At 35, his best days may be slightly behind him, but he's such a crafty performer that it's hard to dismiss him just yet.
FUTURE: He is scheduled to defend his title against Satoshi Hasono on Dec. 31 in Japan.

23. PAUL WILLIAMS

DIVISION: MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 40-2-0 (27)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 5
STATUS REPORT: No longer the most-feared man in boxing, Williams seems to be in a downward spiral, losing to Sergio Martinez last November (KO by 2), and then barely scraping by Erislandy Lara (W 12). Most thought he didn't deserve the win over Landy. That's why he took such a tumble in the rankings, along with the fact that he hasn't been impressive in a long time.
FUTURE: Some wonder if Williams has a future since he has taken a lot of punishment lately. One thing is for certain: no more quick-handed southpaws.

24. JEAN PASCAL

DIVISION: LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
RECORD: 26-2-1 (16)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 14
STATUS REPORT: Pascal spent his year as a foil for Bernard Hopkins (D 12; L 12). He did pretty well, dropping the future Hall of Famer twice in their first bout and shaking him up a time or two in the rematch. Going 0-1-1 is usually a bad year. Going 0-1-1 with Hopkins is not so bad. Pascal is a free-swinging, awkward fighter who makes good fights. He has some personality, too.
FUTURE: Pascal is scheduled to fight in December, but no opponent has been set at press time. Let's hope for something involving Tavoris Cloud.

25. ROBERT GUERRERO

DIVISION: LIGHTWEIGHT
RECORD: 29-1-1 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 35
STATUS REPORT: Personal problems and tough breaks have occasionally slowed Guerrero's career momentum. The most recent incident was a torn rotator cuff that caused the cancellation of a bout with Marcos Maidana. But between setbacks the former junior lightweight and featherweight titlist had a strong year, earning wins over Vicente Escobedo (W 12) and the always-tough Michael Katsidis (W 12).
FUTURE: If the Maidana bout isn't rescheduled, there are plenty of good lightweights and junior welters for Guerrero. If he can stay healthy, that is.

26. VICTOR ORTIZ

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 29-3-2 (22)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 69
STATUS REPORT: With his spirited victory over Andre Berto (W 12), he proved he's better than many thought, and definitely better than the fighter who struggled to a majority draw with Lamont Peterson last December. With his knockout loss to Floyd Mayweather (KO By 4), he proved he still has a lot to learn. The chinks in Ortiz's armor -- a vulnerable chin, lapses in focus -- make him interesting. But they also make us realize he'll never be a superstar. Still, he rehabilitated his image once before, coming a long way from his loss to Marcos Maidana. Maybe he can come back from the Mayweather debacle, too.
FUTURE: He's carping about a rematch with Mayweather, but a rematch with Berto is more likely.

27. ANDRE BERTO

DIVISION: IBF WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 28-1-0 (22)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 22
STATUS REPORT: It was an up and down year for the talented Berto. He stopped Freddy Hernandez in November of 2010 (KO 1) and then lost his WBC welterweight title to Victor Ortiz (L 12). He returned in a big way, dominating the previously undefeated Jan Zaveck for the 1BF belt (KO 5). The loss to Ortiz may have created a fire under Berto, which is bad news for the welterweight division.
FUTURE: A rematch with Ortiz is a distinct possibility.

28. MIKKEL KESSLER

DIVISION: SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 44-2-0 (33)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 27
STATUS REPORT: When Kessler went down with an injury in 2010, the Showtime Super Six tournament felt a bit hollow without him. Fortunately, he looked solid in his comeback bout against Mehdi Bouadla (KO 6). He's a shade past his best, but he's still one of the most reliable, hard-working fighters around.
FUTURE: The super middleweight class is the sport's new glamour division. Kessler, 32, could still be a force and could still make money there. But his decision to face Robert Stieglitz – probably in early 2012 after the fight was postponed when Kessler injured his hand – is a sign that he may prefer fighting in Europe for alphabet belts. Too bad.

29. HOZUMI HASEGAWA

DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 29-4-0 (12)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 15
STATUS REPORT: Apparently, "Hasagawa" is Japanese for "glass jaw." We didn't get too worked up when he was stopped in four by Fernando Montiel in 2010, but when Jhonny Gonzalez did the same to him this April we had to seriously reconsider Hasagawa. In between KO losses, he managed to win a thriller over Juan Carlos Burgos (W 12) for the vacant WBC belt, which he promptly lost to Gonzalez.
FUTURE: It's been quite a comedown for a fighter some referred to as "The Japanese Pacquiao." He's only 30, though, and he's a colorful character. A smart promoter could resurrect him, perhaps for a rematch with Gonzalez.

30. TAVORIS CLOUD

DIVISION: IBF LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 23-0-0 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 32
STATUS REPORT: Cloud works hard and the results are paying off. Since last year's RING 100, he has scored wins over Fulgencio Zuniga (W 12), and Yusaf Mack (KO 8). He's a rarity in boxing, in that he is actually as tough as he looks.
FUTURE: Who wouldn't want to see Cloud against any of the top 175-pound fighters? He's on the verge of something big. The only problem is that he's still somewhat anonymous, and the big names might not want to risk fighting him. Cloud is about to learn they aren't all as willing to step up as Glen Johnson.

31. MARCOS MAIDANA

DIVISION: WBA JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 31-2-0 (28)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 57
STATUS REPORT: How did this crude slugger get so far up our list? First, he took part in a fight-of-the-year candidate against one of the best fighters currently working, Amir Khan (L 12). Then he fought a second fight-of-the-year candidate against a boxing legend, Erik Morales (W 12). Then, just to stay busy, he crushed Petr Petrov (KO 4). A bout with Robert Guerrero fell through this year but could resurface in 2012. Until then, he will call out Khan for a rematch, which may never happen.
FUTURE: At press time he was mulling a mandatory title defense against Paul McCloskey. Another possibility was Humberto Soto.

32. HUMBERTO SOTO

DIVISION: LIGHTWEIGHT
RECORD: 56-7-2 (33) 1 NO-CONTEST
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 34
STATUS REPORT: It was another strong year for Soto. He started by winning a hellacious fight with Urbano Antillon in December (W 12) 2010. Soto then won a trio of fights in Mexico over Fidel Munoz (W 12) Motoki Sasaki (W 10) and Jose Alfaro (KO 2). For a fighter who isn't necessarily on boxing's A-list, he's enjoying a great second wind at age 31.
FUTURE: He relinquished his WBC lightweight title to campaign at 140. A bout with Erik Morales, who was "handed" the WBC junior welterweight belt in September, would be worth seeing.

33. ORLANDO SALIDO

DIVISION: WBO FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 36-11-2 (24)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 92
STATUS REPORT: A lesson for all journeymen who want to rise in our RING 100 rankings: Just beat one of the top guys, which is what Salido did when he whacked out Juan Manuel Lopez (KO 8) last April. He followed that with a devastating performance against Kenichi Yamaguchi (KO 11).
FUTURE: Chances are his successful run ends when he meets Lopez in a rematch, but a game slugger like Salido always has a chance.

34. JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ

DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 31-1-0 (28)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 19
STATUS REPORT: It was a rocky year for Lopez. He started well, scoring a stoppage over Rafael Marquez (KO 8), but was then blindsided by Orlando Salido (KO by 8). Although many expected something like that to happen eventually, what with Lopez's defensive lapses and his tendency to get dropped, we didn't expect Salido to be the one to derail Lopez's winning streak. Lopez beat Mike Oliver (KO 2) in October, but Oliver had been KO'd twice before, so he was a perfect mark for the heavy handed Lopez. "Juanma" is still a fearsome character, but the chin problems persist.
FUTURE: Top Rank will continue to push him, and rightfully so. He's got the star quality that a lot of fighters lack. He needs to erase the Salido blemish from his record before anything else.

35. SHANE MOSLEY

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 46-7-1 (39)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 16
STATUS REPORT: After being blown out by Manny Pacquiao (L 12), 40-year-old Mosley seemed ready for the pasture. But he will probably linger, beating guys who aren't in his class, and then losing to fighters who are young and strong and quick. Like Evander Holyfield, he's still too good to get KO'd, so he'll give us the old line about fighting until someone knocks him out.
FUTURE: He loves boxing. He'll hang on. It won't be pretty.

36. TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA

DIVISION: WBC JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 39-4-3 (24)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 55
STATUS REPORT: The Japanese thrill machine made a big splash in America by beating Rafael Marquez (W 12) on Oct. 1. This year also saw him beat Maurico Munoz (KO 9). His current 16-fight win streak includes a win over Jhonny Gonzales, which looks better now that Gonzales is enjoying a bit of a resurgence.
FUTURE: Nonito Donaire has been mentioned as Nishioka's next opponent.

37. ABNER MARES

DIVISION: IBF BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 22-0-1 (13)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 51
STATUS REPORT: Mares won Showtime's bantamweight tournament by rumbling with Vic Darchinyan (W 12) and then Joseph Agbeko (W 12). The second win was tainted by the endless low bows thrown by Mares and will be remembered more for the lousy officiating by Russell Mora than for Mares' efforts. Still, he's a tough kid with more than a little talent, and he's going to make noise in the division. He's already the best bantamweight fighter ever named Abner.
FUTURE: A rematch with Agbeko is coming on Dec. 3. Keep the punches up, Abner.

38. KOKI KAMEDA

DIVISION: WBA BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 26-1-0 (16)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 40
STATUS REPORT: The controversial Kameda rebounded from the loss of his WBC flyweight title by jumping to 118 and beating Alexander Munoz (W 12) for the vacant WBA strap. Two successful defenses followed, against Daniel Diaz (KO 11), and David De la Mora (W 12).
FUTURE: He picked the right division, for there are plenty of good bantamweights. How about he makes his American debut on Showtime against one of the tourney fighters? Not likely, but we can dream. At press time he was scheduled to fight in Japan on Dec. 7.

39. ANSELMO MORENO

DIVISION: WBA BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 31-1-1 (11)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 39
STATUS REPORT: He should've been part of Showtime's bantamweight tournament, but he made do this year without the big-time coverage, making his ninth successful title defense over aging ex-titlist Lorenzo Parra (KO 8).
FUTURE: He will pit his boxing skills against the still ornery Vic Darchinyan on Dec. 3.

40. RAFAEL MARQUEZ

DIVISION: JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 40-7-0 (36)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 23
STATUS REPORT: Marquez is at the point where he only loses to the best, which has been the case this year, dropping bouts to Juan Manuel Lopez (KO By 8) and Toshiaki Nishioka (L 12). A stay-busy bout in July against Eduardo Becerril (KO 6) wasn't much to get excited about.
FUTURE: He's still competitive, but he's 36 and has a lot of miles on him. Maybe he'll keep appearing on Mexican pay-per-view undercards as a sort of "guest attraction." Maybe some sanctioning organization can create another paper title for him. Or maybe, as his older brother approaches 40, we might be saying goodbye soon to one of the greatest brother acts in boxing history.

41. ROMAN GONZALEZ

DIVISION: WBA JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 30-0-0 (25)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 43
STATUS REPORT: Two easy wins over Omar Salado (KO 7) and Manuel Vargas (W 12) weren't much to brag about, but a shocking KO of Omar Soto (KO 2) reminded us once again of Gonzalez's punching prowess. "Chocolatito" likes to stay busy and was shooting to defend his title again in December, perhaps in Nicaragua.
FUTURE: There are high hopes that Gonzalez will meet Giovani Segura, but Gonzalez wants to remain at 108 for a few more fights, while Segura fought his most recent bout at a whopping 115 and has openly discussed moving up from 108 permanently. Here's hoping the two little bangers meet up at some point soon.

42. IVAN CALDERON

DIVISION: JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
RECORD: 34-2-1 (6)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 30
STATUS REPORT: It's difficult for the lighter fighters to make their way up the list. The only way to do it is to establish extreme dominance for a long period of time, which is what Calderon did. Unfortunately, after consecutive knockout losses to Giovani Segura and a split-decision victory over unknown Felipe Rivas after moving back down to strawweight on Oct. 29, he's now making his way down the list.
FUTURE: He wants to fight WBO strawweight titleholder Moises Fuentes.

43. GLEN JOHNSON

DIVISION: LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT/SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 51-15-2 (35)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 38
STATUS REPORT: Johnson has lost four of his last eight, but the old tiger still has teeth. He joined the Showtime Super Six and bombed out Allen Green (KO 8), and then dropped a close one to Carl Froch (L 12). Johnson may be reaching the point where he's just good enough to lose, but he remains one of the few fighters working today who will guarantee you an interesting, competitive fight.
FUTURE: The "Road Warrior" was scheduled to travel to Quebec City to face Lucian Bute on Nov. 5.

44. VIC DARCHINYAN

DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 37-3-1 (27)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 36
STATUS REPORT: He doesn't seem quite as scary as he once did, but he's still a formidable opponent for anyone smaller than a featherweight. A split decision loss to Abner Mares, a not particularly impressive win over Yonnhy Perez (W Tech Dec. 5) and then a victory over Evans Mbamba (W 12) marked his year. At 35, the world's most dangerous Armenian-Australian seems near the end of the line. It's too bad he was never on HBO, because if there has ever been a fighter in need of the 24/7 treatment, it would be crazy-eyes Vic. What is he like at home? Does he strangle goats? Does he yell at school buses? Can he bend spoons with his mind? We may never know.
FUTURE: He meets the very talented Anselmo Moreno on Dec. 3 in Anaheim.

45. JHONNY GONZALEZ

DIVISION: WBC FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 50-7-0 (44)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Knocking out the high-ranking Hozumi Hasegawa (KO 4) for the WBC belt was enough to bring Gonzalez onto THE RING 100. The 30-year-old Gonzalez followed up with wins over Tomas Villa (KO 4) and the increasingly shopworn Rogers Mtagwa (KO 2). Although Gonzales is enjoying a good run, winning 10 in a row since losing to Toshiaki Nishioka in 2009, it's hard to figure where he fits among the world's top fighters. He's a banger, that's for sure. If the streak continues, we could imagine him cracking the Top 40 next year.
FUTURE: At press time, there was loose talk of a December fight with Elio Rojas.

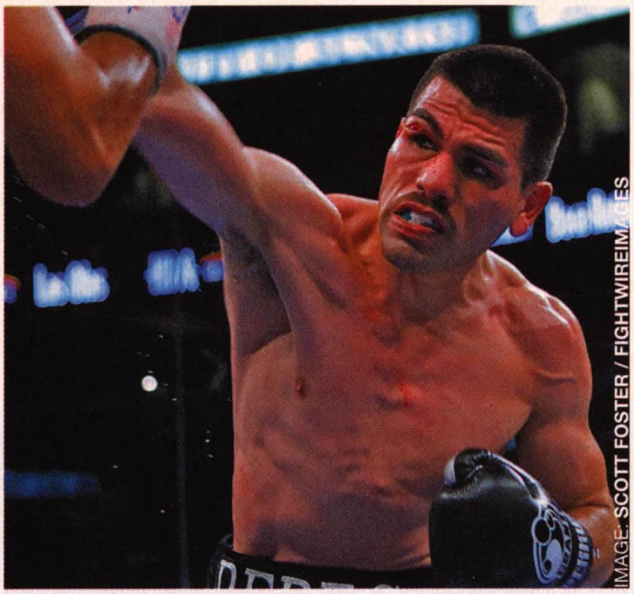


IMAGE: SCOTT FOSTER / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

46. ALFREDO ANGULO

DIVISION: JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 20-1-0 (17)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 45
STATUS REPORT: Inactive since July 2010, Angulo spent the year dealing with visa problems as well as tension with promoter Gary Shaw. After his contract was acquired by Golden Boy Promotions, Angulo returned to the ring in August 2011 with an easy win over journeyman Joseph Gomez (KO 1). We have missed Angulo, not only for his punching power, but we sort of liked that big, drooling pit bull he used to bring into the ring with him.
FUTURE: Angulo was sue to meet hardcase James Kirkland on Nov. 5 in a fight-of-the-year-type matchup.

47. SAUL ALVAREZ

DIVISION: WBC JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 38-0-1 (28)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 100
STATUS REPORT: We're still not sure if he's the real deal or not, but he keeps rolling over opponents like a little red-haired tank. Recent victims include Alfonso Gomez (KO 6), Ryan Rhodes (KO 12) Matthew Hatton (W 12), and Lovemore Ndou (W 12). That's a pretty strong list, folks. Alvarez is doing the right thing by staying active, but we'd like to see him develop some movement to go along with those heavy hands.
FUTURE: "Canelo" was due to face Kermit Cintron on Nov. 26, with Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. possibility waiting in the wings for 2012.

48. KELLY PAVLIK

DIVISION: SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 37-2-0 (32)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 29
STATUS REPORT: He didn't look great in beating Alfonso Lopez last May (W 10) on the Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley undercard. He followed that with a bizarre pull-out from a scheduled Showtime fight with Darryl Cunningham. Now Pavlik says he's ready to return to action. Let's see it. We'd like to think he can still punch, although he hasn't hurt anybody in a while. Well, he's hurt himself, especially his own chances of ever being taken seriously again, but as far as hurting an opponent, it has been a while.
FUTURE: After dealing with personal problems, injuries and alcohol rehab, Pavlik seems a bit unsteady. Still, he's a charismatic fighter with a following. There could be a money fight with any of the top super middleweights, but we're not certain he'll put in the work to regain his old form. We'd like to see him take a couple tune-ups just to prove he's still valid.

49. HUGO CAZARES

DIVISION: JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 35-7-2 (25)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 46
STATUS REPORT: It was a typical year for the gritty, hit-or-miss Cazares. He won two bouts, first beating Hiroyuki Hisataka (W 12) and then stopping Arturo Badillo (KO 3). Then he lost a split decision to Tomonubo Shimizu in Japan (L 12). We can't drop Cazares too far down the list. Come on, it's not like he's Paul Williams.
FUTURE: Cazares was set to face Jhunriel Ramonal on Nov. 19 in Mexico.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

50. ANTONIO MARGARITO

DIVISION: JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGH
RECORD: 38-7-0 (27)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 31
STATUS REPORT: After being beaten into mulch by Manny Pacquiao (L 12) and then laying off for several months to recover, Margarito has become boxing's bogeyman, a lumbering giant with a scandalous past who looks imposing but has lost two of his last three and doesn't seem like much anymore. All he has now is his size and an ability to soak up punishment. Whether these qualities are enough to keep him competitive in big fights is questionable.
FUTURE: Top Rank is propping up the bogeyman one more time, for Margarito faces Miguel Cotto on Dec. 3 in New York. It's a rematch of the 2008 bout won by Margarito. It figures to be a good fight, and if Margarito wins, he is reborn.

51. TOMASZ ADAMEK

DIVISION: HEAVYWEIGHT
RECORD: 44-2-0 (28)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 48
STATUS REPORT: After beating a couple of plug-uglies like Kevin McBride (W 12) and Vinny Maddelone (KO 5), Adamek had the misfortune of meeting Vitali Klitschko (KO by 10). Adamek was never in the fight.
FUTURE: Soon to be 35, Adamek could end up getting punched out by a number of big, young heavyweights who'd like his name on their resume. Or, he'll fight a few more times in New Jersey against easy marks, make a couple of bucks and then walk away. We'd prefer the latter.

52. JOSEPH AGBEKO

DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 28-3-0 (22)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 53
STATUS REPORT: "King Kong" Agbeko suffered through a couple of dozen low blows in his bout with Abner Mares (L 12). But even if his testicles took a beating, his reputation didn't take a hit. He's just a likeable, hard-working little fighter. The sport could use a dozen more of him. Prior to the ball-busting bout with Mares, he avenged a previous loss to Yonnhy Perez (W 12).
FUTURE: A rematch with Abner Mares is set for Dec. 3 in Anaheim, Calif.

53. DEVON ALEXANDER

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 22-1-0 (13)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 50
STATUS REPORT: His non-performance against Timothy Bradley (L Tech. Dec. 10) turned off a lot of people, and his narrow split decision over Lucas Matthysse (W 12) didn't help his image, either. Maybe we overestimated him, but we don't remember him looking like such a weak slapper.
FUTURE: He is talking about fighting at 147, and he just signed with Golden Boy Promotions. One possible opponent is Paul Malignaggi.

54. YONNHY PEREZ

DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 20-2-1- (14)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 49
STATUS REPORT: He was a bit disappointing in the Showtime bantamweight tournament, barely getting out of the box against Vic Darchinyan (L Tech. Dec. 5), and losing to Joseph Agbeko (L 12). He's still one of the top bantamweights around, though.
FUTURE: You could keep matching Perez against the fighters from the Showtime tournament and we wouldn't complain.

55. OMAR NARVAEZ

DIVISION: WBO JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 35-0-2 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 61
STATUS REPORT: After several defenses of his WBO junior bantamweight strap, including recent wins over Cesar Seda (W 12,) Victor Zaleta (W 12) and William Urina (W 12), Narvaez vacated his belt and is moving on up to 118.
FUTURE: Narvaez will likely fight guys his own size from now on.

56. MARCO HUCK

DIVISION: WBO CRUISERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 34-1-0 (25)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 63
STATUS REPORT: Huck is one of boxing's best-kept secrets. His right hand seems guided by radar, and he wins with a workmanlike yet fan-friendly style. He made three title defenses in 2011, all in Germany, over Ran Nakash (W 12), Hugo Garay (KO 10) and Rogelio Rossi (KO 6). He has a good thing going in Germany, and is building up an impressive fan base. He lost to Steven Cunningham in 2007. Maybe it's time for a rematch.
FUTURE: He is talking about moving up to heavyweight.

57. ERIK MORALES

DIVISION: WBC JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 52-7 (36)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Morales is 4-1 since embarking on a comeback in 2010, and he still has a bit of the old "El Terrible" in him. He defeated Francisco Lorenzo (W 12) in December 2010, and in April he lost a highly competitive bout to Marcos Maidana (L 12) that will be remembered as one of the best fights of 2011. Most recently he stopped the previously undefeated Pablo Cano (KO 10), and was handed the vacant WBC belt.
FUTURE: Since Lucas Matthysse had to drop out with an illness to allow Cano in, we should get Morales-Matthyse in 2012. As of now, Anthony Crolla is scheduled to be his next opponent on Dec. 10.

58. LUCAS MATTHYSSE

DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 28-2-0 (26)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: To most observers, Matthysse won his recent bouts against Zab Judah and Devon Alexander. Unfortunately, he lost both by close, split-decision verdicts. The least we can do in response is to place him on our RING 100 list. In between those two bogus losses, he scored a knockout over veteran and former titlist DeMarcus Corley (KO 8). A September bout with Erik Morales was canceled when Matthysse came down with a viral infection.
FUTURE: After a pair of screwjobs, we wouldn't blame Matthysse if he never fought in America again. He's this year's Ali Funeka. However, we'd pay to see him fight Marcos Maidana in a battle of the bangers.

59. DAIKI KAMEDA

DIVISION: JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 22-2-0 (14)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 64
STATUS REPORTS: After a split decision over Silvio Olteanu (W 12), the younger Kameda brother decided he could no longer make the flyweight limit and vacated his WBA belt. He has since scored knockouts over Jesus Martinez (KO 5), Chatchair Monthon Gym (KO 2) and Raul Hidalgo (KO 1).
FUTURE: Nothing set at press time. Too bad the Kameda brothers aren't heavyweights. They could take on the Klitschkos.

60. YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ

DIVISION: IBF CRUISERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 25-1-0 (13)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: His less than satisfying win over Steve Cunningham (W Tech Dec. 6) not withstanding, Hernandez deserved to enter THE RING 100 because he's generally considered one of the top cruiserweights working today. Since a loss to Wayne Braithwaite in 2008 (KO by 3), he has won 11 in a row, displaying a good mix of boxing and punching. A former Cuban amateur of some renown, he's beaten some decent opponents, including Steve Herelius (KO 7) and Aaron Williams (W 8). He had Cunningham all but out in the first round of their bout. Later on, referee Mickey Vann stopped the bout because Hernandez had some minor cuts caused by a head clash. The scores had Hernandez ahead at the time of the stoppage. It was a crap win, but Hernandez isn't a crap fighter.
FUTURE: A rematch with Cunningham will probably happen.

61. JORGE ARCE

DIVISION: WBO JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 58-6-2 (45)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUES REPORT: The rebirth of Arce has been one of the year's better boxing stories. Undefeated in his last seven bouts, he stopped Adolfo Ramos (KO 1) last December and then shocked the boxing world with a bombs-away effort against well regarded newcomer Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. for the WBO belt (KO 12). Arce continued his streak with a knockout win over Simphiwe Nongqayi (KO 4), avenging an earlier defeat.
FUTURE: We don't know how long this renewed Arce will last – he still bleeds all over the place – but let's enjoy it while we can. He was scheduled to defend the title again in November, although no opponent was set at press time.

62. STEVE CUNNINGHAM

DIVISION: CRUISERWEIGHT
RECORD: 24-3-0 (12)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 37
STATUS REPORT: What goes around comes around. Cunningham was dropped in a bout with Troy Ross last year, but won when Ross was deemed too bloody to continue (KO 5). This year Cunningham was dropped in a bout with Yoan Hernandez, but the bout was stopped when Hernandez was deemed too bloody to continue, only this time the verdict went to Hernandez (L Tech Dec. 6). In between those two bouts, Cunningham won a lopsided decision over Enad Licina (W 12).
FUTURE: It's hard to say where Cunningham goes from here. He's 35, with a shaky chin, so we can't see him entering the heavyweight class. He could aim for a rematch with Hernandez. Cunningham had recuperated from a bad first-round knockdown and was outboxing Hernandez at the time the bout was stopped.

63. DAVID HAYE

DIVISION: HEAVYWEIGHT
RECORD: 25-2-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 56
STATUS REPORT: Chutzpah – Definition (noun): To challenge Vitali Klitschko and threaten to knock him out, mere weeks after making a fool of yourself by losing every round of a fight to Wladimir Klitschko (L12). This is especially true when your only other fight of late was a fishy win over Audley Harrison (KO 3). Synonyms: gall, effrontery, cheekiness. Usage: It takes a lot of chutzpah to challenge anyone when you ought to be home hiding in shame.
FUTURE: In early October Haye made good on a promise to retire by his 31st birthday, and claimed that talks to un-retire for a fight with Vitali were over before they began. That was purely a money issue, though, so if the price is right we may yet see more of the Hayemaker.

64. JOAN GUZMAN

DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 30-0-1 (17) 1 NO-CONTEST
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 59
STATUS REPORT: If two hard bouts with Ali Funeka weren't bad enough, Guzman tested positive for a banned diuretic after stopping journeyman Jason Davis (NC 2). The problem isn't that Guzman is a cheater; the problem is that he's 35 and can't cut weight like he did 15 years ago as an amateur flyweight. He is presumably moving to junior welterweight, but it's hard to imagine him making an impact in that jam-packed division.
FUTURE: After serving an eight-month suspension, Guzman was due to return Nov. 18 to fight Armando Robles in the Dominican Republic.

65. DANIEL GEALE

DIVISION: IBF MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 26-1-0 (15)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: It's time to acknowledge Geale. He scored a surprising split-decision win over Sebastian Sylvester last May (on Sylvester's German turf, no less!) to win the IBF belt. Geale then successfully defended his new title by beating Eromosele Albert (W 12). He also has a win over Roman Karmazin (KO 12), who was once a highly ranked fighter. The only blemish on Geale's record is a loss to Anthony Mundine (L 12).
FUTURE: The likelihood is that Geale stays in his native Australia and defends a bunch of times against easy targets, perhaps building toward a big-moolah rematch with Mundine. Australian fighters don't come to America very often. Mundine has been that country's biggest star for years, and how many of us would recognize him? We'll never see Geale, either.

IMAGE: CRAIG BENNETT / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

66. MIKEY GARCIA

DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 27-0-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Garcia is one of those fighters who doesn't seem to have a big punch but gradually wears you down with pinpoint boxing. Some who have learned this first hand include Rafael Guzman (KO 4), Matt Remillard (KO 10), Olivier Lontchi (KO 5) and Juan Carlos Martinez (KO 4). At 23, there's a lot of upside here.
FUTURE: Nothing was set at press time.

67. ALEXANDER POVETKIN

DIVISION: WBA HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 22-0-0 (15)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 85
STATUS REPORT: Povetkin defeated the once highly touted Ruslan Chagaev in August (W 12). Chagaev rocked him once or twice but Povetkin overcame the blows and was very strong throughout the late rounds. Maybe there's some hope for this 2004 Olympic gold medalist yet, even if he is still on a diet of easy marks, such as Nicolai Firtha (W 10), a brittle chinned journeyman who has been KO'd four times but somehow went the distance with Povetkin.
FUTURE: Povetkin is in talks to face nearly 50-year-old Evander Holyfield in December. Povetkin's trainer Teddy Atlas once helped Michael Moorer defeat Holyfield. This time it should be a little easier.

68. RICO RAMOS

DIVISION: WBA JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 20-0-0 (11)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: A shocking knockout win over Akifumi Shimoda (KO 7) earned Ramos a title belt and at least one guaranteed highlight reel moment when HBO prepares a year-end film segment to commemorate 2011. Prior to beating Shimoda, Ramos had beaten such veterans as Heriberto Ruiz (KO 2) and Reynaldo Lopez (W 8).
FUTURE: The powers-that-be are working on matching Ramos with highly decorated Cuban star Guillermo Rigondeaux.

69. JONATHAN VICTOR BARROS

DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 33-1-1 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Barros enters the RING 100 with something less than a flourish. He was down twice but won an ugly foul-fest over the highly rated Celestino Caballero (W12) on Barros' home turf in Argentina, which means the scoring might have gone the other way in another country, and then lost a decision in the rematch. Still, Barros is rugged and can't be taken lightly. He's also fortunate that his lopsided loss to Yuriorkis Gamboa in 2010 took place in Germany and none of us saw it. Other recent conquests include Miguel Roman (W 12) and Irving Berry (KO 7).
FUTURE: He will have to regroup now that he lost his title to Caballero.

70. ULISES SOLIS

DIVISION: IBF JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 34-2-3 (21)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 76
STATUS REPORT: Undefeated since losing to Brian Viloria eight fights ago, Solis regained the IBF title he lost to Viloria, but he did it the hard way. The titleholder at that point was Argentina's Luis Lazarte, so Solis had to go to Argentina to challenge him. Even though Lazarte was penalized two points and one of the judges had Solis winning handily, the bout ended in a draw. Braving the hometown stink, Solis returned to Argentina for a rematch, this time winning via split decision. He then thoroughly dominated Jether Olivas (W 12) in his first title defense.
FUTURE: Solis has been very vocal about a rematch with Viloria.

71. ANTONIO DEMARCO

DIVISION: WBC LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 26-2-1 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: The Mexican's rise as a lightweight contender hit a roadblock in February 2010, when he was outclassed and then stopped by then-WBC titleholder Edwin Valero. After that, we more or less forgot about him. Well, he jogged our memory on Oct. 15, when he stunned the boxing world by coming from behind to stop Jorge Linares by a spectacular 11th-round KO to win the WBC's vacant belt. It was one of the more memorable KOs in recent memory. And at 25, DeMarco might just be hitting his stride.
FUTURE: A rematch with Linares?

72. JORGE LINARES

DIVISION: JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
RECORD: 31-1-0 (20)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 44
STATUS REPORT: Linares would've landed higher on the list if he'd hung on to beat Antonio DeMarco on Oct. 15 but, after a very good performance in defeat, he belongs among the Top 50. Linares, who also defeated Adrian Verdugo (KO 7) since last year's list, demonstrated remarkable boxing skills for 10-plus rounds before he fell victim to bad cuts and DeMarco's will in the 11th. Linares bounced back from an earlier setback, a first-round KO against Juan Carlos Salgado in 2009. He'll probably bounce back again because of his ability and trainer Freddie Roach, who still believes Linares is star material.
FUTURE: Anyone who saw the Linares-DeMarco fight would love to see a rematch.

73. KERMIT CINTRON

DIVISION: Junior middleweight
RECORD: 33-4-1 (28)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 58
STATUS REPORT: Kermit "The Killer" looked as if the flame had gone out during a losing effort against Carlos Molina (L 10). He'd been out of action for over a year and it showed. One month after losing to Molina, Cintron returned to action with a win over Antwone Smith (W 10). The swiftness of Cintron's return makes us believe he is serious.
FUTURE: Cintron was scheduled to face Saul Alvarez on Nov. 26 in Mexico, a bout that should tell us what he has left.

74. FELIX STURM

DIVISION: WBA middleweight titleholder
RECORD: 36-2-1 (15)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 68
STATUS REPORT: A win over Ronald Hearns (KO 7) and then a shaky split decision over Matthew Macklin (W 12) didn't do much for Sturm's reputation, but it also didn't disrupt the sort of bland groove he has established for himself in Germany. He is what he is – good jab, decent ring science, not much else.
FUTURE: He is scheduled to defend his title against unbeaten Martin Murray on Dec. 2.

75. ANTHONY MUNDINE

DIVISION: JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 43-4-0 (25)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 71
STATUS REPORT: It was quite a year for Aussie Anthony. First, he lost a shocker to inexperienced upstart Garth Wood (KO 5) in December 2010, ending a winning streak at 17. Five months later, he avenged the loss (W 10) and in June he scored a stoppage win over Xavier Toliver (KO 7). He concluded 2011 with a unanimous decision over Rigoberto Alvarez on Oct. 29.
FUTURE: Nothing was set at press time.

76. MATTHEW MACKLIN

DIVISION: MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 28-3-0 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: If there was any justice in the world, Macklin would be IBF middleweight titlist, having beaten Felix Sturm handily in Germany last June only to come up on the short end of a bummer split decision. But he proved to us that he is at least on the level of Sturm, so he gets a mention on our list. The native of Birmingham rarely fights outside of the United Kingdom, but he's an energetic fighter who likes to throw down. He recently signed with promoter Lou DiBella, which means we may actually see more of him. Some of his previous victims include Ruben Varon (W 12) and that craggy old trial horse, Ramon Campos (W 10).
FUTURE: Nothing set at press time, but DiBella also promotes world champ Sergio Martinez. Could a Martinez-Macklin bout be on the horizon?

77. POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM

DIVISION: JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
RECORD: 45-2-0 (31)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 74
STATUS REPORT: After a surprise loss to Ryol Li Lee in 2010, Kratingdaenggym stayed active in 2011, notching wins over Simson Butar (W 6), Vicky Tahumil (KO 2), Eric Barcelona (W Tech Dec. 6) and Mohammed Metualy (KO 4). Not great competition, but enough to keep him from a major demotion. He's still for real.
FUTURE: He'd probably like another crack at Lee.

78. ZSOLT ERDEI

DIVISION: LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
RECORD: 33-0-0 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 77
STATUS REPORT: Former cruiserweight and light heavyweight titlist Erdei hit the American shores this year in mild fashion, beating Samson Onyongo (W 8) and Byron Mitchell (KO 6). After spending most of his career in Germany, he's now fighting out of New Jersey, as Main Events's Kathy Duva tries to do with him what she did with Tomasz Adamek.
FUTURE: He's 37. Not a huge hitter, but talented. We'd like to see him against any of the top 175-pounders.

79. PAUL MALIGNAGGI

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 30-4-0 (6)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 79
STATUS REPORT: It's hard to believe this brash kid will be 31 soon. That must mean the rest of us are about 70. Anyway, Paulie stayed in the win column this year by defeating Jose Cotto (W 10), Michael Lozada (KO 6) and Orlando Lara (UD 12). He is still troubled by hand injuries, but he can still box the ears off of most guys who are not at the absolute A-level of the sport. He recently left New York to train in Los Angeles at the Wild Card Boxing Club. He also left the junior welterweight class to fight at 147.
FUTURE: He is in the mix for big fights 147 pounds, although he's also open to moving back down to 140 for the right fight.

80. VANES MARTIROSYAN

DIVISION: JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 31-0-0 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: A bright young star fighting out of Glendale, Calif., Martirosyan is an Armenian transplant who represented America in the 2004 Olympics before hooking up with Top Rank and trainer Freddie Roach. He has posted wins over the likes of Kassim Ouma (W 10), Billy Lyell (W 8), Joe Greene (W 10), Saul Roman (KO 7) and Bladimir Hernandez (KO 2). He reportedly turned down an HBO date with Alfredo Angulo, which inadvertently led to his breaking up with manager Steven Feder. There was a lot of rumor and innuendo about Martirosyan holding out for a shot at WBC titlist Saul Alvarez, or his not wanting to fight Angulo in Mexico, or that he has become picky about his opponents. Whatever. "The Nightmare" scored wins over Andre Berto and Tim Bradley in the amateurs, so we're considering him someone to watch.
FUTURE: Martirosyan could end up with a title shot against Saul Alvarez or Alfredo Angulo sometime soon.

81. SERGEI DZINZIRUK

DIVISION: MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 37-1- 0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 66
STATUS REPORT: If you can get dropped five times and stopped in the eighth but still look good in the process, that's what Dzinziruk accomplished against Sergio Martinez in March. He's a very good boxer, and prior to losing to Martinez, he was on a serious winning streak with some decent names on his record, including Daniel Dawson (W 12) Joel Julio (W 12), Sebastian Lujan (W 12) and Daniel Santos (W 12). He was ready to get back into action by meeting Lukas Konecny, a fighter he defeated via majority decision in 2008, but an injury forced the bout's postponement.
FUTURE: The bout with Konecny, set for the Czech Republic, will eventually happen. After that, Dzinziruk may restrict his boxing to European locations. That's just as well, for we can't spell or pronounce his name, anyway. Tell us, is it "Sergei," or "Serhiy?" We've seen both.

82. MICHAEL KATSIDIS
DIVISION: LIGHTWEIGHT
RECORD: 28-4-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 67
STATUS REPORT: We're not sure how many more times Katsidis can lose before his name is no longer meaningful, but for now it still means something. He put in a game effort against Juan Manuel Marquez last year before being stopped in the ninth. Katsidis followed that loss by losing less impressively to Robert Guerrero (L 12). After the Guerrero loss, Katsidis' team searched far and wide for a suitably brittle opponent to get Katsidis back on the winning track. They found one in Michael Lozado, a 28-year-old journeyman who had already been knocked out six times, including one stoppage at the delicate hands of Paul Malignaggi. Predictably, Katsidis stopped Lozado in three.
FUTURE: Katsidis was scheduled to meet Ricky Burns on Nov. 5 in London. If 31-year-old Katsidis isn't too shopworn, it might be an interesting matchup of slugger and boxer.

83. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
DIVISION: WBO SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 40-2-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: A German product by way of Russia, Stieglitz has won nine in a row since being stopped by Librado Andrade in 2008. Some of his recent conquests include Khoren Gevor (DQ 10), Enrique Ornelas (W 12), and Karoly Balzsay (KO 11). The high point of his career might have been splitting a pair with former IBF titlist Alejandro Berrio (KO 11; KO By 3).
FUTURE: He journeys to Denmark to defend his WBO belt against Mikkel Kessler. No date was immediately set after Kessler suffered a hand injury in training.

84. BRIAN VILORIA
DIVISION: WBO FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 29-3-0 (16)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Viloria has made a career out of rebuilding his career. After being knocked out last year by Carlos Tamara, Viloria began what must be considered his third round of comebacks. And it's working. In 2011, Viloria beat Omar Soto via split decision, Liempetch Sor Veerapol (KO 7) and then faced Julio Cesar Miranda for the WBO flyweight title. It was almost inevitable that Viloria defeated Miranda and won his third belt (W 12), but he had to survive a first-round knockdown to do it. Welcome back to The Ring 100, "Hawaiian Punch."
FUTURE: There is speculation that Viloria will face Giovani Segura.

85. LAMONT PETERSON
DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 29-1-1 (15)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 94
STATUS REPORT: He climbed from the canvas twice to earn a draw with Victor Ortiz last December, a draw that some think should've been a victory for Peterson. Judge Robert Hoyle gave it to Peterson 95-93. His win over once-defeated Victor Cayo (KO 12) was more like it. Peterson isn't particularly spectacular, but he does many things well. That can add up.
Future: A shot at junior welterweight titlist Amir Khan was set for Dec. 10 in Peterson's hometown of Washington DC.

86. NATHAN CLEVERLY

DIVISION: WBO LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 23-0-0 (11)
LAST YEAR'S REPORT: 86
STATUS REPORT: Cleverly, the latest Welsh fighter to create some interest in the UK, scored three wins in 2011, the first being a methodical victory over Nadjib Mohammedi (W 12). The second was over Aleksy Kuziemski (KO 4), attained when Kuziemski was badly cut. And the third was a majority decision over Englishman Tony Bellow on Oct. 15. The backstage politics that allowed Cleverly to gain the WBO belt is not particularly interesting, but what counts is that he has a good jab and a willingness to battle on the inside when he needs to get his hands dirty. He occasionally gets tagged and wobbled, but at 24 he has time to learn to tuck his chin in. He also has a mathematics degree. If he's smart enough to earn a degree, he should be able to learn some basic ring defense.
FUTURE: Cleverly would like to fight Bernard Hopkins.

87. ANDY LEE

DIVISION: Middleweight
RECORD: 27-1-0 (19)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: Unranked
STATUS REPORT: You have to admire a Londoner who relocates to Detroit so he can train with Emanuel Steward. Lee's talents were showcased in his recent whitewashing of dangerous Brian Vera (W 10), a fighter who had previously KO'd Lee. Since losing to Vera in 2008, Lee has won 11 in a row, including recent wins over Alex Bunema (W 10) and Craig McEwan (KO 10). The latter victory was a memorable fight of the year candidate, with Lee coming alive in the final rounds of a close fight to score a KO.
FUTURE: One would think a title shot is right around the corner.

88. DIMITRY PIROG

DIVISION: WBO MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 19-0-0 (15)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 89
STATUS REPORT: Maybe we got too excited when Pirog arrived out of the blue to wipe out Daniel Jacobs back in 2010, but his herky jerky, Roy Jones Jr.-meets-Ivan Drago style is fun to watch. And it was good enough to earn him two wins since our last Ring 100, a 12-round decision over Javier Maciel, and then a stoppage of Gennady Martirosyan (KO 5). Will Pirog ever come back to the U.S.? Does he realize how hungry we are for good fighters, and that we will gladly root for a Russian as long as he throws punches? Don't American dollars mean anything anymore?
FUTURE: Nothing was scheduled at press time, but Pirog is promoted by Artie Pelullo, the fellow who brought us Acelino Freitas. That should help get Pirog back on our airwaves.

89. RICKY BURNS

DIVISION: WBO LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 32-2-0 (9)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 98
STATUS REPORT: The soft-hitting Burns made three defenses of the WBO junior lightweight belt he won last year, beating Andreas Evensen (W 12), Joseph Laryea (W 12), and Nicky Cook (KO 1). Cook quit with a back injury, which was a disappointment.
FUTURE: He was scheduled to meet tough Michael Katsidis on Nov. 5.

90. GRZEGORZ PROKSA

DIVISION: SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 30-4-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 83
STATUS REPORT: If all it took was a victory over Sebastian Sylvester to make THE RING 100, everybody would do it. But only two fighters have done it this year and Proksa did it resoundingly, stopping the former IBF titleholder on Oct. 1 (KO 4). Cocksure and highly skilled, the Polish southpaw Proksa has won 26 in a row since beginning his career in 2005. Earlier in 2011 he defeated Pablo Navascues for a European belt (KO 9), traveling to Navascues' Spanish backyard to do the job. Proksa also beat Sylvester in Germany, which means "Super G" is a fierce predator on the road.
FUTURE: He's calling out middleweight champion Sergio Martinez.

91. LIBRADO ANDRADE

DIVISION: SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
RECORD: 30-4-0 (23)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 83
STATUS REPORT: The 33-year-old Andrade lost to the fairly ordinary Aaron Pryor Jr. (KO 5) in 2011 and then scored a routine win over Matt O'Brien (KO 3). It wasn't a great year, and Andrade is not versatile enough to gain much ground in the stellar 168-pound division. Still, he's always one caveman punch away from changing the course of a fight, he boasts a win over Robert Stieglitz and he's as TV-friendly as you can get. If you don't get at least a little excited when you hear Andrade is fighting, we don't know what we can do for you.
FUTURE: A bout with Sakio Bika would be fun. We'll supply band-aids and aspirin.

92. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

DIVISION: WBC Middleweight Titleholder
RECORD: 43-0-1 (30) 1 no-contest
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: Unranked
STATUS REPORT: We figured it would happen eventually. Chavez Jr. pulled off a title win in 2011 by beating Sebastian Zbik via close majority decision. Judge him harshly if you must, but if you didn't know he was the son of a Hall of Fame legend and weren't prejudiced by the easy publicity he attracts, you'd think he was a good little fighter.
FUTURE: Chavez was scheduled to make his first title defense against Peter Manfredo on Nov. 19.

93. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

DIVISION: WBA junior lightweight titleholder
RECORD: 17-0-0 (14)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: Unranked
STATUS REPORT: Uchiyama scored an eighth-round stoppage of Takashi Miura in January 2011, surviving a third round knockdown and then rallying for the win. It was the third defense of a belt he won from Juan Salgado in 2010, the same year he was voted Asia's Fighter of the Year. Unfortunately, the way junior lightweights keep swapping belts around, Uchiyama may not be on our list next year.
FUTURE: Nothing was scheduled at press time.

94. JUAN CARLOS SALGADO

DIVISION: IBF JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 24-1-1 (16)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Salgado had a good 2011, earning a win over Guadalupe Rosales (W 10) and then engaging in a very competitive bout with Argenis Mendez (W12) to win a vacant belt.
FUTURE: The Mendez bout was close enough — Salgado was dropped in the last round — that a rematch might be in order. Or maybe an enterprising promoter can get Salgado and Takashi Uchiyama in the ring again for a unification bout.

95. TAKALANI NDLOVU

DIVISION: IBF SUPER BANTAMWEIGHT TITLE
RECORD: 33-6-0 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: It took him three tries, but Ndlovu finally got a win over Steve Molitor (W 12), taking the Canadian's IBF title in March. Maybe after being stopped by Molitor in 2007 and outpointed in 2010, the little South African figured out how to fight him. If nothing else, Ndlovu has proven that persistence pays off. He narrowly hung onto his title when he defeated Mexican Giovanni Caro by a split decision on Oct. 29 in Mexico.
FUTURE: He had nothing in the works at press time.

96. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE

DIVISION: IBF JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 31-4-0 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: 97
STATUS REPORT: After taking the IBF belt from Cory Spinks in 2010, Bundrage won a personally significant fight in June 2011, defeating Sechew Powell (W 12). It was significant because Powell KO'd in Bundrage in one round back in 2005. It may have taken six years, but Bundrage would agree that revenge is best served cold; he gave Powell a boxing lesson in the return. The only down side is that Bundrage has been fighting only once per year since his appearance on The Contender, and at age 38 he occasionally talks about retiring. He hopes to get at least one big fight on his ledger before he goes, though. Manager Emanuel Steward and promoter Don King had better start working for this guy.
FUTURE: He's calling out everybody from welterweight to middleweight. No one is biting.

97. ADRIAN HERNANDEZ

DIVISION: WBC JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
RECORD: 22-1-1 (14)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: After turning back a relatively easy challenge in Erik Ramirez (KO 3), Hernandez went on to win the WBC 108-pound title by defeating veteran Gilberto Keb Baas (KO 11) in a fight that may be remembered at the end of the year when we're handing out awards. Hernandez made his first successful defense in September against an inexperienced Gideon Buthelezi (KO 2).
FUTURE: Nothing was scheduled at press time, but there are so many good fighters between 108 and 112 that something great ought to happen for Hernandez soon.

98. ERIC MOREL

DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
RECORD: 45-2-0 (2)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: Despite a nasty legal situation that interrupted his career in 2007, the 36-year-old Morel is 10-0 since a loss to Martin Castillo in 2005. He hasn't been whipping future Hall of Famers, but a few of his wins have been over respectable opponents, including Gerry Penalosa via split decision, and Luis Maldonado (KO 4). Morel is such a smart, seasoned fighter that he might have trouble securing fights.
FUTURE: Morel's dance card was blank as of press time.

99. ADRIEN BRONER

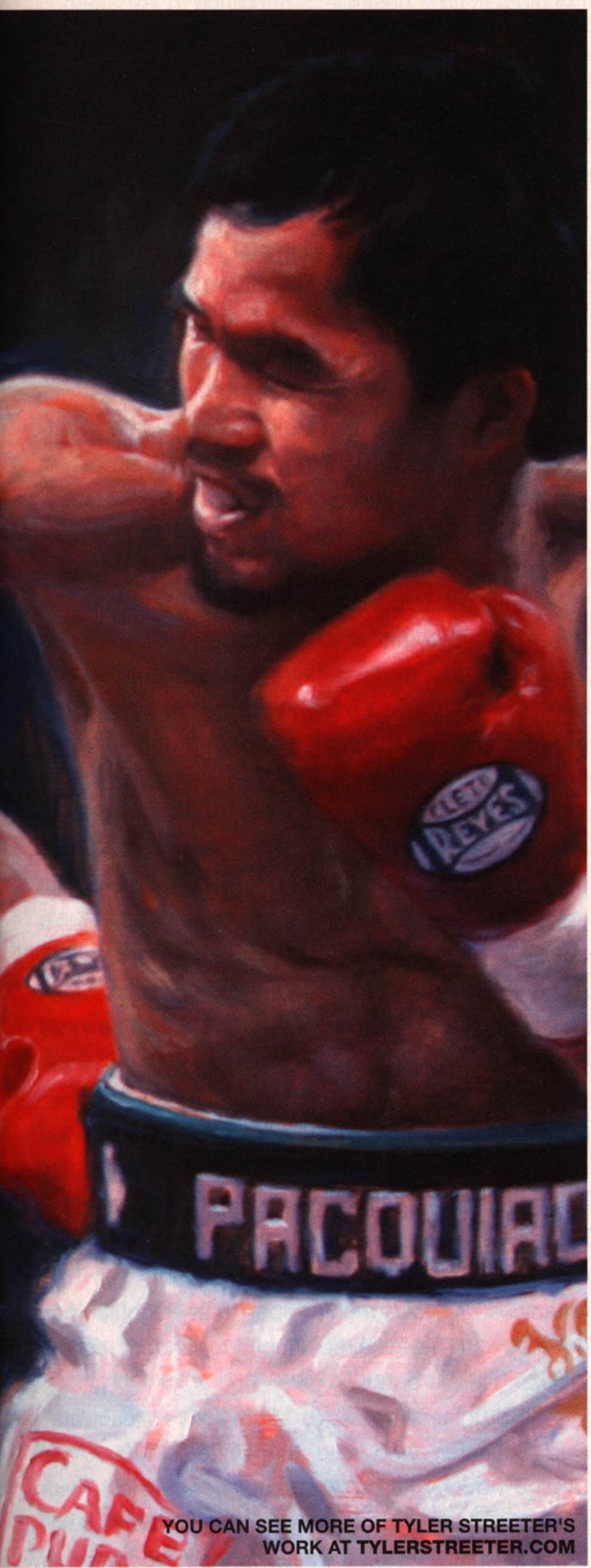
DIVISION: JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
RECORD: 21-0-0 (17)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: After scoring a number of early-round knockouts, Broner was thrown into the ring with veteran Daniel Ponce De Leon in 2011. Broner fought methodically, wasn't especially impressive, but walked out with a victory (W 10). He followed that by blasting out Jason Litzau (KO 1). Broner is quick and has a good understanding of ring science, but his arrogant personality has already created a large amount of anti-Broner sentiment among boxing fans. He may become one of those fighters we love to hate.
FUTURE: At press time, Broner was tentatively scheduled for a Nov. 26 bout against an unnamed opponent in Cincinnati.

100. JAN ZAVECK

DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
RECORD: 31-2-0 (18)
LAST YEAR'S RANKING: UNRANKED
STATUS REPORT: It was Zaveck's bad luck to make his American debut against a fired up Andre Berto. Zaveck was competitive, but he suffered several cuts and couldn't continue after the fifth, losing the IBF title he won from Isaac Hlatshwayo in 2009. Prior to the Berto beating, Zaveck defeated Paul Delgado (KO 5), and Rafal Jackiewicz (W12), reversing an earlier defeat in the latter fight. We definitely haven't seen the last of this seven-time Slovenian national champion.
FUTURE: Maybe Zaveck can challenge WBA titlist Vyacheslav Senchenko. Unfortunately, it will involve some politics because Senchenko is prone to fighting less-than-tough challengers and never fights outside his zip code.

IMAGE: SCOTT FOSTER / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

WILL THEY *EVER* FIGHT?



YOU CAN SEE MORE OF TYLER STREETER'S WORK AT TYLERSTREETER.COM

THAT REFERENCE TO PACQUIAO-MAYWEATHER MIGHT BE THE **MOST-ASKED QUESTION IN MODERN BOXING HISTORY.** THE ANSWER? WHO KNOWS?

WORDS: **NORM FRAUENHEIM**
PAINTING BY: **TYLER STREETER**

The boiling plot includes a revolving cast of villains and suspects, rumors and denials, hope and broken promises, lies today and maybe the truth tomorrow. Depending on the point-of-view, it could be a cartoon, or a mystery, or a marketing plan, or a post-mortem, or Jerry Seinfeld's show about nothing. Much has been said, written and imagined about Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

But their dream fight? Dream on. It's still fantasy, yet to cross over into the reality that would restore a sport's relevance to that crowd of casual fans who don't know Sergio Martinez or Juan Manuel Marquez and probably don't care if they do for at least as long as there is no Pacquiao-Mayweather. For them, for the last two years and for now, it is the only fight that matters.

There are times – make that most of the time – when Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank and Mayweather representative Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy must feel a little bit like that weatherman played by Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*, a 1993 film. Every time they wake up, there they are again, facing another day when they're sure to hear somebody, somewhere, ask the same old question. While ordering coffee or crossing the street, there it is all over again: Will Pacquiao and Mayweather ever fight?

No matter how hard Arum worked at promoting the third chapter in the Pacquiao-Marquez trilogy on Nov. 12, there it was, repeated as often as the rock-and-roll refrain in a golden oldie. How Long Has This Been Going On?

"With all my travels, with all the places I go for boxing, there is always that one question," said Schaefer, the Golden Boy CEO who represented Mayweather in the futile first two rounds of negotiations, first in late 2009 and again in mid-2010. "Is the fight going to happen? It has come to the point where people don't even have to specify what

IMAGE: ED MULHOLLAND / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

The fact that Bob Arum (left) of Top Rank and Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy are back to having a working relationship adds fuel to the hope that the Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayeather Jr. fight can be made.

they're talking about. You know, you just know."

The good news, perhaps, is that people are still asking, despite a litany of breakdowns throughout an ongoing saga often called bizarre by an exasperated Arum. Multiply the public's questions and compound the interest. It sounds is if the potential for a record-setting market, worth maybe $40 million to $50 million for each welterweight, is still there. Like that Murray character trapped in time, Arum and Schaefer will be at the table, negotiating until they get it right.

But can they? For every possible dollar in the fine print, there's a devil lurking in the weeds. Some, however, have been exorcised, the biggest of which is the rancor that divided Top Rank and Golden Boy throughout 2010 and most of 2011. Six months ago, it looked as if there was a better chance that the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street would hold hands and sing Kumbaya before Top Rank and Golden Boy would ever do business again. The rivals couldn't say good morning to each other, much less talk about a fight. But signs of a profitable peace emerged in September with Top Rank's Yuriorkis Gamboa and Golden Boy's Daniel Ponce de Leon in Atlantic City, N.J. Gamboa won the featherweight bout, a technical decision. The bigger victory was an improved chance at Pacquiao-Mayweather.

And Leonard Ellerbe, Mayweather's advisor, raised hopes even further early in November when he said his fighter plans to get back into the ring on May 5 in the biggest fight possible, a reference to Pacquiao.

Pacquiao's handlers were livid over the timing of Ellerbe's comments, which they believe was meant to upstage Pacquiao-Marquez III, but the fact Mayweather has reiterated his desire to fight Pacquiao clearly is a plus.

"The prospects of the fight happening are better than they've ever been," Schaefer said.

Arum, perhaps wary of everything that has already transpired, was more cautious.

"We have had meetings, but until the fights are made it is silly to talk about them, Arum said.

But the mere fact that Golden Boy and Top Rank are talking, instead of insulting each other, represents progress. Without that, any chance at Mayweather-Pacquiao would be impossible. Still might be. More on that later.

"Look, the important thing is Bob and I know how to work together on major promotions," said Schaefer, who confirmed reports that there are ongoing talks for a much-anticipated showdown between Top Rank's Julio Cesar Jr. and Golden Boy's Saul "Canelo" Alvarez in a fight for the heart of Mexico. Another reason for Schaefer's optimism is the apparent framework for Olympic-style drug-testing, a Mayweather demand and the issue that destroyed the first round of negotiations. It sparked the Golden Boy-Top Rank feud and led to a Pacquiao lawsuit for defamation against Golden Boy and Mayweather for allegations that he uses performance-enhancers. Pacquiao dropped the suit against Golden Boy. But he is still suing Mayweather, a potential sticking point in the next round of talks. Mayeather's many trips to Las Vegas' Clark County courts on various misdemeanor and felony charges have not included a stop to file a deposition on the defamation suit. He was a no-show on that day. Meanwhile, various media report that Pacquiao has gone beyond his initial objections to random testing, including blood draws.

"All drug testing issues seem to be resolved," said Schaefer, who said the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) would conduct the tests when Pacquiao is in Los Angeles and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) would do them when he is in

the Philippines.

But Mayweather and trainer/uncle Roger Mayweather continue to say things that suggest they don't believe Pacquiao has agreed to the procedure.

"You got to take the test to be the best," said Mayweather, who during a news conference after his controversial win over Victor Ortiz in September ignored follow-up questions about reports that Pacquiao would take tests. There's speculation, much of it from Top Rank, that Mayweather is creating an escape route. To wit: He'll demand that Pacquiao do all of his training in the U.S. because he doubts the procedure would be followed in the Philippines. Pacquiao, a Filipino Congressman and icon, would surely say no way. Even Schaefer says that hypothetical wouldn't fly.

"I don't think you can tell guy that you can't train here, you can't train there," he said. "As long as there is WADA, it doesn't matter where you train."

Whatever the chances, they might be moot in the event of a Marquez upset Pacquiao in their second rematch, which was scheduled for Nov. 12. Schaefer talked about his renewed hopes at finally getting the deal done before Pacquiao-Marquez III.

Schaefer, like virtually everybody other than Marquez and trainer Nacho Beristain, was confident that Pacquiao would prevail. If not, he might get an early start on a campaign for his nation's presidency. At times, it has looked as if that office might be easier to attain than a fight with
Mayweather, who has said yes, no and a lot more whenever asked about the possibility.

It's as hard for the media to pin him down on Pacquaio as it is for an opponent to hit him. At the formal news conference before Ortiz was dropped after dropping his hands, Mayweather took the podium and said: "We only want to fight the biggest and the best out there and Manny Pacquiao, yes, you're next."

When pressed by media crowded around him minutes later, however, Mayweather backpedaled when asked whether he had virtually agreed to fight Pacquiao.

"I never said that, never said that at all," Mayweather said.

Chances at Pacquiao-Mayweather ever becoming more than just talk is hard to judge. That talk is the problem. It is full of contradictory messages.

Arum told the Filipino media in August that he would do "whatever we can to make that fight happen" when he arrived in Manila for a press tour with Pacquiao and Marquez. In October before Pacquiao worked out for the media at trainer Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, however, Arum talked as if he had endured enough, heard enough. Arum told ESPN LosAngeles that "the fight would never, ever happen." Blame Mayweather, he said in a re-make of what he has often argued in saying that Mayweather simply doesn't want to risk a loss.

"When Mayweather talks about how he hates Top Rank, he's talking bulls---," Arum was quoted as saying. "What Mayweather hates is Manny's right hand. Mayweather has no chin and Manny will knock him out. Pacquiao and Mayweather is a three- or four-round fight. Period. And who knows that best? Mayweather. ... If Manny agreed just to jab with the right hand, the fight would be made in 30 seconds."

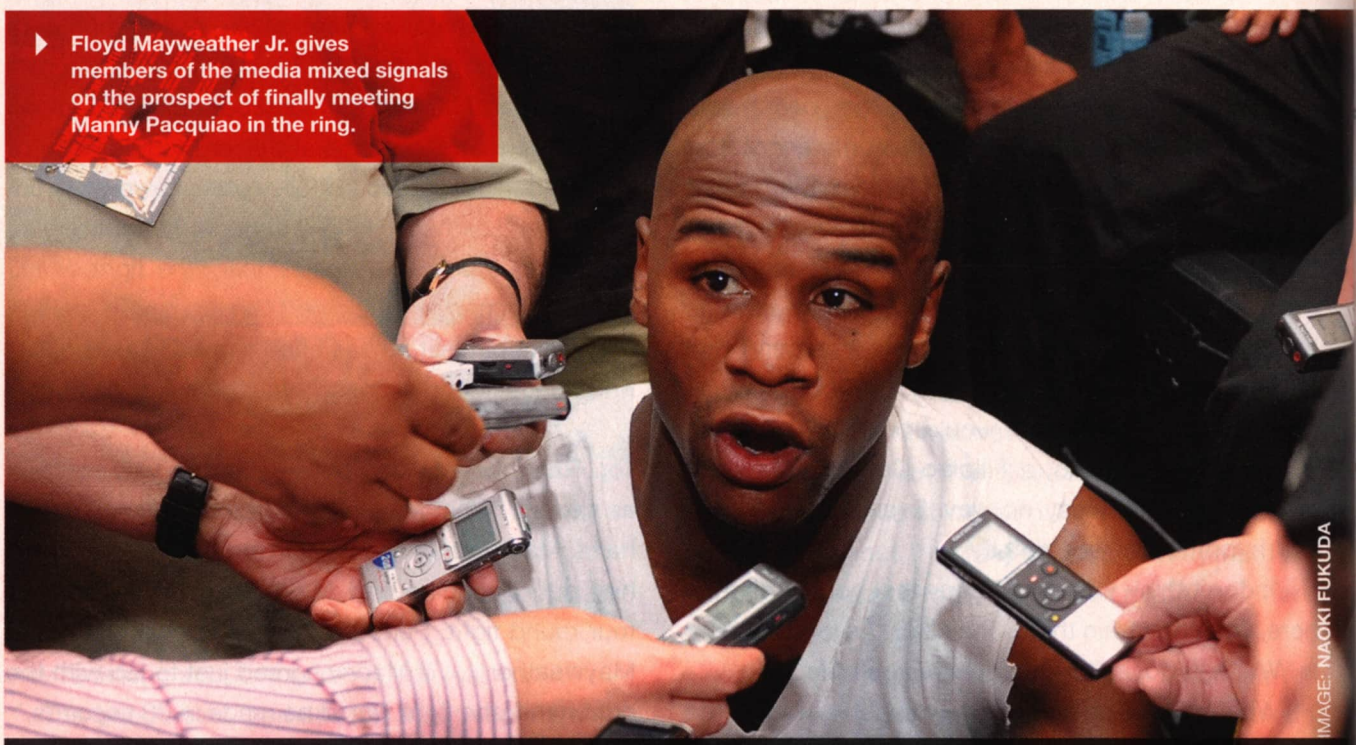
Leave it to somebody at a higher pay grade to decipher whether Arum was posturing in an attempt to finally lure an angry Mayweather into an agreement. What needs no interpretation, however, is the Mayweather-Arum relationship. It's poisonous. It wouldn't be a Mayweather news conference without some insult at Arum, his former promoter.

"That's the great thing about getting away from Bob Arum," Mayweather said after stopping Ortiz with a combination that Arum says cheated the public. "I can fight when I want to fight and I get 100 percent of my money."

But the fight isn't about friends or enemies, Schaefer says. It's about business and it is critical to the game's well-being, says the Golden Boy CEO, who argues it is more important then ever to make the fight happen.

"The fact is, they really don't care much for each other," Schaefer said. "But that's OK. They don't need to be buddies. Even during the promotion, I'm sure there will probably be harsh words, some dialogue. That should make for some interesting story lines. But that should not – in any way, shape or form – be a reason that one of history's biggest fights doesn't happen.

"I mean, Arum and Mayweather don't get along? They don't like each other? Come on." ■



Floyd Mayweather Jr. gives members of the media mixed signals on the prospect of finally meeting Manny Pacquiao in the ring.

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

PACQUIAO VS. MAYWEATHER: THE NON-FIGHT OF THE CENTURY

A TRAGI-COMEDY IN QUOTES

COMPILED BY GARY ANDREW POOLE

ACT I: BLOOD TESTING

"The steroids aren't going to make [Pacquiao] no faster. It's going make him relentless and hit strong, but that's it." **– Floyd Mayweather Sr., September 2009, *Grand Rapids Press***

"We gonna' find out what he got in his system when these real doctors have him take the tests" **– Roger Mayweather, December 2009, *Boxingscene.com***

"Mayweather pressed for blood testing even up to the weigh-in. He knew that Manny gets freaked out when his blood gets taken, and feels that it weakens him. This is just harassment and, to me, just signaled that he didn't want the fight." **– Bob Arum, December 2009, *Grand Rapids Press***

"Mayweather doesn't dictate the rules, boxing commissions do; this is not something required in boxing. We're gonna knock this bum out, he knows it, and he is scared." **– Freddie Roach, December 2009, TIME.com**

"Manny Pacquiao's achievements come from God-given talent and an indefatigable work ethic – not steroids" **– Daniel Petrocelli, Pacquiao's attorney after filing an anti-defamation lawsuit against Mayweather.**

"Pacquiao's got the power pellets, yo, and the steroid juice. Pacquiao got the power pellets you know." – Floyd

Mayweather Jr., March 2010. **A statement attributed to Mayweather in Case No. 2:09-cv-02448, Pacquiao Vs. Mayweather.**

"As soon as we come off vacation, we're going to cook that little yellow chump. We ain't worried about that. So they ain't gotta worry about me fighting the midget. Once I kick the midget ass, I don't want you all to jump on my d---. So you all better get on the bandwagon now. ... Once I stomp the midget, I'll make that mother f----- make me a sushi roll and cook me some rice." **– Floyd Mayweather Jr., September 2010, Ustream video.**

ACT II: THE NON-NEGOTIATION NEGOTIATION

"Ali is one hell of a fighter but Floyd Mayweather is the best. If you're a clean athlete take the test" **– Floyd Mayweather Jr., April 2010, media conference call**

"Fourteen days is OK with me, as long as [the blood test] isn't done on the day of the fight. Mayweather will no longer have a reason [not to fight.] Let's see if [blood testing] is really the reason." **– Manny Pacquiao, May 2010, *The Guardian***

"I had been negotiating with a representative from each side since May 2nd, carefully trying to put the fight together. Hopefully, someday this fight will happen. Sports fans deserve it." **– Ross Greenburg, former HBO Sports President, June 2010, official statement**

"The truth is no negotiations have ever taken place, nor was there ever a deal agreed upon by Team Mayweather or Floyd Mayweather to fight Manny Pacquiao on Nov. 13." **– Leonard Ellerbe, Mayweather's advisor, July 2010, Official statement.**

"Mayweather has to put up or shut up now" **– Freddie Roach, November 2010, Reuters.**

ACT III:

"Richard Schaefer and Oscar de la Hoya, on behalf

EXPERTS WEIGH IN

THE RING asked five boxing experts three questions: Who's to blame that a fight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight hasn't happened yet? Will it ever happen? And who would win?

GARY ANDREW POOLE
Boxing writer

Who's to blame? Both men and their handlers exist in a reality distortion field, but Mayweather shoulders 85 percent of the blame.

Will it ever happen? Yes. Eventually. Earliest would be November 2012.

Who would win? The Pacman. Mayweather is starting to lose his defensive speed, which favors Pacquiao's two-handed precison and power. KO in the 6th.

AL BERNSTEIN
Broadcaster

Who's to blame? There are so many parties involved. It's really difficult to assign blame.

Will it ever happen? I think it's 50-50. I was optimistic but I'm getting less so. Hopefully they'll do it before they're eligible for their AARP cards.

Who would win? I think Pacquiao gets the nod slightly in my mind, very slightly. It's a pick 'em fight. Floyd could easily win. I lean toward Pacquiao a little because of his volume of punches.

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM
Trainer

Who's to blame? I can't say who is exactly responsible. But I'll tell you what: If I had an opportunity to make $40 million, there ain't no test that I wouldn't take. So I'm going to say this: If Manny's got a problem with taking the test when that kind of money is involved, then I'm going to say that he's at fault.

Will it ever happen? I think so. I think so. I think that before both of those guys are done, that fight will happen.

Who would win? Floyd Mayweather wins easily. Easy. That's easy work for Floyd.

of themselves and Golden Boy Promotions, wish to make it crystal clear that we never intended to claim that Manny Pacquiao has used or is using any performance enhancing drugs, and further state that we do not have any evidence whatsoever of such use." **– May 2011, official statement**

"I have never taken steroids, HGH, or any banned performance-enhancing drug. Period. My success in the ring is due to hard work, belief in God, and the support of my fans. Like every boxer, I am required to take drug tests in connection with every professional fight in the United States. I have passed every one, including my fight against De La Hoya and my most recent victory against Shane Mosley" **– Manny Pacquiao, May 2011, official statement**

"Do I want the Pacquiao fight? Absolutely, if that is what the fans want. I want to give the fans what they want" **– Floyd Mayweather Jr., June 2011, at Mayweather-Ortiz pre-fight press conference.**

"We have agreed in the Pacquiao camp to unlimited random testing done by a responsible, neutral organization. We don't believe USADA is a neutral organization." **– Bob Arum, July 2011, Yahoo! Sports**

"He wants to take the test but for a whole month he doesn't want to take the test. He wants to take the test but he wants to be notified when the people are coming. This sh-- will drive you up the wall. He really don't want to fight. They are tricking you all. How do you think he got this big? By being connected to my name." **– Floyd Mayweather Jr., September 2011, *Sports Illustrated***

"I am satisfied with what I have achieved in my career, I don't need to fight him" **– Manny Pacquiao, September 2011, *Philippine Inquirer***

"I don't need him" **– Floyd Mayweather, September 2011, at Mayweather-Ortiz post fight press conference.** ■

EXPERTS WEIGH IN

ROBERT GARCIA
Trainer

Who's to blame? There's so many stories out there ... that Pacquiao doesn't want to take the blood test. But I really think that (promoter) Bob Arum doesn't really care if that fight happens or not because he can make millions and millions off of Pacquiao fighting with everybody else. I don't know if you can blame anybody.

Will it ever happen? I just think that's a fight we won't see.

Who would win? I've said it a couple of times before that I will pick Pacquiao to win by a decision because Mayweather is too defensive and Pacquiao just throwing five punches to one and winning on points. But maybe not landing all of them, but just like ... Nonito Donaire against Omar Narvaez, where he just threw five times more punches than Narvaez. He didn't do a lot of damage, but just outlanding him was the difference. I could see Manny Pacquiao winning against Floyd Mayweather that way. But Mayweather does have power, and when he lands, he lands good. So it could be a good fight. It will be interesting to see Mayweather and Pacquiao, and it's not too easy to pick a winner. But I will say Pacquiao by a decision in kind of a boring fight.

PAULIE MALIGNAGGI
Boxer

Who's to blame? You know, I'd like to see it happen, I would like to see them come to an agreement. I'm more coming from the situation where if I was asked to take a blood test for a fight of that magnitude, then I would, you know. I don't see a reason not to. We're not asking for him to do a work out a half an hour before the fight and say, "You know, I can't do that, it's going to make me tired." A blood test, you know, a random drug test is part of sports in general nowadays, you know.

Will it ever happen? I don't think that it's going to happen. I don't think so. If it does, I would be very surprised.

Who would win? It's a good fight, so it depends on who is having the better night I guess.

SPRING LOADED:

MAKE SURE IT'S ONE AND DONE, DEWEY

WORDS: **STEVE SPRINGER**

Dewey Bozella said he has no plans to fight again. He would be best served if he sticks to that pledge.

Don't do it, Dewey.

They will come after you, promoters popping up on your doorstep with all sorts of deals, a contract for Dewey Bozella in hand, offering money, fame and glory.

They know your story, know that you spent 26½ years behind bars for a crime you didn't commit, know that you always fantasized about being a professional fighter, know that you realized that dream last month at Staples Center in Los Angeles when you stepped into the ring and emerged from a four-round fight with a unanimous decision victory.

They know that you declared, both before and after the match, that this was a one-time-only event, that, at age 52, you were under no illusions about your ability to launch a successful career as a fighter.

"This was my first and last fight," you said after the win. "It's a young man's game. I did what I wanted to do, and I'm happy. I appreciate everybody that made this possible. This has been one of the greatest experiences of my life."

But they also figure that your 12 minutes in the bright lights had to have left you wanting more after so long in the shadows of a jail cell. They will figure that the fact you got a call from President Obama, congratulating you on your attitude and your determination to put a happy ending on an otherwise sad story, would cause you to seek more adulation.

They will tell you that you already have the material for a great book and movie, but it could be even better with a bigger payday.

Not mentioning, of course, that they are seeking paydays of their own.

I think you are smarter than that. I think the resolve you showed in refusing years ago to admit guilt for a murder you didn't commit in exchange for an immediate release is an indication of your character.

All of your remarks surrounding your fight demonstrate that you have a clear understanding of the brutal nature of the sport, even for men young enough to be your son, or grandson.

I am sure you know your opponent, Larry Hopkins, was hand picked as the perfect foil for the reality show that your match became. If you look up "tomato can," in the dictionary, there is probably a picture of him. He came into the fight 0-3 and seemed meekly willing to make it 0-4, spitting out his mouthpiece five times after feeling a few of your blows.

Such an easy victory might tempt anybody to try it again, but remember, the next opponent might actually be willing and able to fight, and every blow

Bernard Hopkins might've been wise to retire after his spectacular victory over Jean Pascal.

to the head can kill brain cells. You didn't spend more than a quarter century hoping to get your life back only to lose it again with one punch. That would be the cruelest blow of all.

Don't be fooled by looking at 46-year-old Bernard Hopkins, the man who was gracious enough to invite you into his training camp, and think that Father Time is just another foe who can be vanquished with some fancy footwork and a good left hook.

Hopkins is that rarest of fighters, a man who has taken such good care of himself into the latter half of his 40s that he can still be competitive against world-class opponents.

But even with Hopkins, the exclamation point has now been replaced by a question mark, temporary though it may be.

Last May, he was on top of the boxing world, having beaten Jean Pascal in a RING and WBC light heavyweight championship match to become the oldest man to win a major title. Now he's embroiled in the controversy resulting from his fight against Chad Dawson on the night you got your dream match. When Hopkins stumbled onto Dawson's back at the end of the second round, Dawson removed him with sufficient force to send Hopkins crashing to the canvas, injuring his shoulder severely enough to prevent him from continuing.

Referee Pat Russell ruled there was no foul and awarded Dawson a victory by TKO. The WBC has since announced that the fight should have been called a technical draw and gave Hopkins his title back. A decision by the California State Athletic

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

Commission is pending.

There will probably be a rematch, but, by then, Hopkins will be 47 and not getting any better with age. In retrospect, walking away after the Pascal fight might've been the best alternative.

It's an all-too-common story. George Foreman could have retired at age 45 after becoming the oldest man to win a title to that point by knocking out Michael Moorer. Instead, Foreman fought for three more years, struggling to eke out decisions against opponents too inferior to even consider in his younger years, finally finishing up with a loss to Shannon Briggs.

If Muhammad Ali had walked away from the sport after his death match against Joe Frazier in Manila, he might have avoided the medical problems that have clouded his senior years.

Evander Holyfield, once lauded as a four-time heavyweight champion, is now ridiculed as the man who seemed determined to stagger on until he was brain dead.

Now, even Oscar De La Hoya, whom we were assured we'd seen the last of in trunks and gloves, has been hinting of a comeback on his Twitter account.

Don't do it, Oscar.

And don't you do it, Dewey. ■

Steve Springer covered boxing for the *Los Angeles Times* for 20 years and is a past winner of the Nate Fleischer career achievement award. He wrote Oscar De La Hoya's autobiography, *American Son*, a *New York Times* bestseller, and, with co-author Blake Chavez, *Hard Luck: The Triumph and Tragedy of Irish Jerry Quarry*.

"The Bible Of Boxing"®

The RING

ringtv.com®

RingTV.com gives you on a daily basis what the THE RING magazine gives you each month – the best boxing coverage in the world.

Here are just a few of the many features on RingTV.com:

The most-complete day-to-day coverage of the boxing world, including news, award-winning feature stories and photos, unparalleled previews and live fight coverage.

The world's most-respected ratings in all 17 weight classes and pound for pound updated every week.

Live streams of fight cards (including Fight Night Club), weigh-ins, interviews and more.

RingTV, our weekly video show featuring Co-Editors Doug Fischer and Michael Rosenthal in which we review past fights and look forward to upcoming events.

High-quality videos of a variety of events and interviews with the biggest names in the sport.

Up-to-date schedule of major boxing cards.

COMPILED BY **MIKE COPPINGER**

IMAGE: MARTY ROSENGARTEN / RINGSIDE PHOTOS

SERGIO MARTINEZ KO 11 DARREN BARKER

Sergio Martinez entered a heavy favorite against little-known Darren Barker, and while it wasn't nearly as easy as expected, THE RING's middleweight champion once again emerged victorious.

Barker had his moments – fighting out of a high-and-tight guard which Martinez seemed to have problems penetrating – and won rounds while landing his jab on the Argentina native.

But as with many other Martinez opponents of late, Barker finished the bout flat on his back for the count of ten, the 2010 RING Magazine Fighter of the Year's third consecutive knockout victim.

Martinez hurt his foe in the 10th (he out-landed Barker 25-3 in power shots during the round) and finished him in the 11th with a four-punch combination that resulted in a perforated ear drum for the London native.

Speaking of the shot, Barker said, "I can't remember the punch, my legs just fell out from under me," adding, "I was trying to get up but couldn't, I didn't feel he was a massive puncher before that."

THE RING saw the bout for Martinez, 96-94, at the time of the stoppage (1:29).

Martinez knew his game plan would work, stating, "I kept throwing the right hand because I knew it would begin to land, adding, "it landed more and more as the fight went on."

Middleweight contenders Dmitry Pirog and Matthew Macklin were ringside, hoping to get the next crack at RING Magazine's No. 3 pound-for-pound fighter.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Middleweight **LOCATION:** Atlantic City, N.J.
VENUE: Boardwalk Hall **TELEVISION:** HBO
ATTENDANCE: 4,376 **DATE:** Oct. 1, 2011
PROMOTERS: DiBella Entertainment and Matchroom Sport
REFEREE: Eddie Cotton (New Jersey)
CHAMPIONSHIP AT STAKE: RING Magazine Middleweight Championship
SERGIO MARTINEZ AGE: 36 **WEIGHT:** 158
RESIDENCE: Oxnard, Calif.
BIRTHPLACE: Buenos Aires, Argentina **RECORD:** 48-2-2 (27)
DARREN BARKER AGE: 29 **WEIGHT:** 159 ½
RESIDENCE: London, England
BIRTHPLACE: London, England **RECORD:** 23-1 (14)

ANDY LEE UD 10 BRIAN VERA

In March of 2008, "Irish" Andy Lee was a fast-rising prospect climbing the ranks when he was scheduled to face journeyman Brian Vera for a routine fight on ESPN 2. Only the fight didn't go as planned, with Vera rising off the deck in the opening round to shock the Kronk gym product with an eventual 7th round stoppage.

More than three years later, Lee exacted revenge for his only pro loss with a unanimous decision victory, stating afterward, "The win was immeasurable ... It was years coming. If not for tonight, I would have been haunted for the rest of my life."

A rough and tumble affair, Lee landed straight lefts and uppercuts on the inside — an antidote to Vera's wild-winging shots. Both fighters stood toe-to-toe in the middle of the squared circle for much of the contest, with Lee controlling the action in the early rounds.

The tide began to turn in the fifth, as Vera began to bully Lee around the ring, becoming increasingly accurate with his power shots. But the Texan simply couldn't sustain his offense.

Vera, down on the cards, hurt Lee in the final round and looked for the close, but couldn't put his foe on the canvas. Lee fired back with uppercuts on the inside as the bout reached its finish.

Judges John Stewart (NJ) and Joseph Pasquale (NJ) both had it 99-90, while John Poturaj (NJ) had it 98-91, all in favor of Lee. THE RING saw it closer, 96-93 for Lee.

The win places Lee in prime position to face fellow Lou DiBella fighter – and RING Magazine middleweight champion – Sergio Martinez next year.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Middleweight **LOCATION:** Atlantic City, N.J. **DATE:** Oct. 1, 2011 **PROMOTER:** DiBella Entertainment
REFEREE: Steve Smoger (New York) **TELEVISION:** HBO
VENUE: Boardwalk Hall
ANDY LEE AGE: 27 **WEIGHT:** 163 **RESIDENCE:** Detroit, Mich. **BIRTHPLACE:** London, England **RECORD:** 27-1 (19) **RING RATING:** 9
BRIAN VERA AGE: 29 **WEIGHT:** 163 **RESIDENCE:** Austin, Texas **BIRTHPLACE:** Forth Worth, Texas **RECORD:** 19-6 (12)

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ TD 6 STEVE CUNNINGHAM

In a controversy-filled title tilt, Yoan Pablo Hernandez defeated the former RING Magazine No. 1 cruiserweight Steve Cunningham via split technical decision, netting the IBF strap in the process. The match was marred from the onset, as Hernandez came out fast and dropped Cunningham with a thudding left behind the right ear. Referee Micky Vann appeared to administer a long count, as Cunningham rose off the canvas on completely unsteady legs and barely made it out of the round.

Round three saw a clash of heads, which resulted in the southpaw Hernandez bleeding profusely from his right eye. A few rounds later, another cut appeared on Hernandez's right eye after a second clash of heads. Following the conclusion of round six, Vann intervened and called a halt to the bout on the recommendation of ringside physician Walter Wagner. The fight was stopped even though Hernandez's vision wasn't affected, creating further controversy against the backdrop of the bout taking place in Hernandez's back yard.

Judge Pawel Kardyni scored it 59-44 and Dave Parris scored it 58-54, both for Hernandez. Judge John Foster saw it for Cunningham, 57-56. The IBF ordered an immediate rematch to settle the surrounding controversy, with the bout due to take place no later than Feb. 11.

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Cruiserweight
LOCATION: Neubrandenburg, Germany
DATE: Oct. 1, 2011 **PROMOTERS:** Sauerland Event
REFEREE: Mickey Vann (UK)
STEVE CUNNINGHAM AGE: 35 **WEIGHT:** 199 **RESIDENCE:** Philadelphia, Penn. **BIRTHPLACE:** Philadelphia, Penn. **RECORD:** 24-3 (12) **RING RATING:** 3
YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ AGE: 26 **WEIGHT:** 200 **RESIDENCE:** Halle an der Saale, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany **BIRTHPLACE:** Havana, Cuba
RECORD: 25-1 (13) **RING RATING:** 2

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA UD 12 RAFAEL MARQUEZ

Returning to the U.S. for the first time in five years and scoring his biggest win since knocking out Jhonny Gonzalez in 2009, WBC junior featherweight champ Toshiaki Nishioka took his place at the top of the 122-pound heap by defeating former champ Rafael Marquez.

The hoped-for Vazquez-Marquez type of brawl never happened. Instead, Marquez waded in with the use of his jab while the Japanese southpaw hammered his challenger with can't-miss lefts. Marquez had no answer for Nishioka, though a clash of heads in the eighth and a big right in the ninth had the few Mexicans in the crowd hoping for a U-turn in momentum.

It was not to be. Nishioka's southpaw missiles continued to crash into Marquez's mug and he sailed through the championship rounds for the unanimous victory.

All three Nevada judges (Duane Ford, Patricia Morse Jarman, Richard Houck) scored the fight for the champion, 117-111, 116-112 and 115-113, respectively.

"I don't see this as a loss," said Marquez, who falls to 40-7, 36 KOs. "I was ahead on points from the earlier rounds and I won the fight."

Nishioka, 39-4-3, 24 KOs, attributed the win to defense. "Marquez is a great fighter and I could not relax for a second in the fight."

Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior Featherweight **LOCATION:** Las Vegas
VENUE: MGM Grand Marquee Ballroom
TELEVISION: Fox Deportes **DATE:** Oct. 1, 2011
PROMOTERS: Top Rank, Teiken Promotions and Promociones Zanfer **REFEREE:** Kenny Bayless (Nevada)
TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA AGE: 35 **WEIGHT:** 122
RESIDENCE: Tokyo, Japan **BIRTHPLACE:** Kakogawa, Hyogo, Japan **RECORD:** 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
RING RATING: 1
RAFAEL MARQUEZ AGE: 36 **WEIGHT:** 121
RESIDENCE: Mexico City, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Mexico City, Mexico **RECORD:** 40-7 (36)

KELL BROOK TKO 6 RAFAEL JACKIEWICZ

The latest in a long line of authentic fistic talents from the Brendan Ingle school on Sheffield's Wincobank Road, Brook stepped ever nearer a welterweight title shot with this emphatic stoppage win. Jackiewicz's experience and pedigree posed obvious threats to the former undefeated British champion, but Brook's slick skills were exploited to pernicious effect, with the hometown hero in charge all the way until referee Howard Foster's intervention at 2:36 of the sixth stanza.

The immediate prize will be an appearance on the undercard of compatriot Carl Froch's Super Six final showdown against Andre Ward on December 17 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, a showcase opportunity which the 25-year-old is determined to make the most of. "I've been dreaming of fighting on a massive show in America and I plan to put on a great performance," Brook said. "The pressure will be on to dazzle the American fans and that's exactly what I plan to do."

His progress was swift and savage once he went to work on the 34-year-old Pole whose 'Braveheart' moniker was blunted in a brutally uncompromising way. Brook's jab ripped relentlessly into Jackiewicz's flesh and, by the third round, he was hitting solidly with heavy hooks which further diminished the visitor's morale. One attack to the body left him gasping for air and a cut swelled above his left eye as "Special K" augmented his attack with hard rights. In the sixth, Jackiewicz's legs gave way under sustained assault and the referee's decision to call a cessation saved the Pole from inevitable further punishment.

Brook's promoter, Eddie Hearn of Matchroom Sport is excited for his fighter's debut in the states, saying "His Atlantic City appearance will be the final test for Kell before a major marquee fight in the spring."

Brian Doogan

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Welterweight **LOCATION:** Sheffield, England
VENUE: Ponds Forge Arena **TELEVISION:** Sky Sports
DATE: Oct. 8, 2011 **PROMOTERS:** Matchroom Sport
REFEREE: Howard Foster (England)
KELL BROOK AGE: 25 **WEIGHT:** 146 ¼
RESIDENCE: Sheffield, Yorkshire, UK
BIRTHPLACE: Sheffield, Yorkshire, UK
RECORD: 25-0 (17) **RING RATING:** 6
RAFAEL JACKIEWICZ AGE: 34 **WEIGHT:** 146 ¾
RESIDENCE: Minsk Mazowiecki, Poland
BIRTHPLACE: Minsk Mazowiecki, Poland
RECORD: 38-10-1 (19)

ANTONIO DeMARCO TKO 11 JORGE LINARES

In one of the most memorable bouts to date in 2011, Antonio DeMarco rallied and pulled off the upset, stopping Jorge Linares in the 11th while down several points on the cards.

DeMarco was thoroughly out-boxed from the onset, but continued to walk through Linares' punches, displaying his Mexican warrior spirit.

In the mid-rounds, Linares suffered two severe cuts at the hands of DeMarco – a diagonal slice across the bridge of his nose and a nasty gash over his right eye.

The cuts coupled to form a crimson mask on the face of the Venezuela-born resident of Tokyo, Japan, and eventually the pouring blood rendered his vision non-existent.

DeMarco took advantage and seized the moment, stalking Linares and pouncing with successful barrages of punches in round 10.

In the 11th, a sure-fire candidate for round of the year, DeMarco completed his improbable comeback and closed the show, as referee Raul Caiz Sr. intervened and saved Linares from further punishment.

Linares bravely fought back in the penultimate stanza, but succumbed to his own impaired vision and the relentless pressure of his counterpart.

DeMarco was down big on all three cards at the time of the stoppage, 99-91, 98-92 and 98-92, making this one of the more stunning come-from-behind KOs in recent memory.

IMAGE: BRYAN CROWE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Lightweight **LOCATION:** Los Angeles, Calif.
VENUE: Staples Center **TELEVISION:** HBO PPV
DATE: Oct. 15, 2011 **PROMOTER:** Golden Boy Promotions and Gary Shaw Productions
REFEREE: Raul Caiz Sr. (California)

ANTONIO DeMARCO AGE: 25 **WEIGHT:** 134 ½
RESIDENCE: Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico
RECORD: 26-2-1 (19) **RING RATING:** 3

JORGE LINARES AGE: 26 **WEIGHT:** 134 ¾
RESIDENCE: Tokyo, Japan
BIRTHPLACE: Barinas, Venezuela **RECORD:** 25-2-1 (10)
RING RATING: 10

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

NONITO DONAIRE UD 12 OMAR NARVAEZ

Nonito Donaire, the RING Magazine No. 4 pound-for-pound fighter in the world, cruised to a shutout decision over Omar Narvaez, but didn't impress.

The fight was a tepid affair from the onset, as "The Filipino Flash" – with a four-inch height advantage over the career 115-pounder – couldn't penetrate Narvaez's high guard.

Narvaez, making his U.S. debut, produced success in bursts but could never sustain an offense, as he seemed content to fight out of a defensive shell and not take any chances.

The fight was so boring, that Donaire compared it to the Manny Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey contest from March 2010, derided as one of the most unentertaining high-profile contests in recent memory.

"I wanted him to open up," said Donaire, 28. "He wouldn't move. He had his hands up. Now I know how Pacquiao felt with Clottey."

Donaire didn't entertain in his east coast debut, but prevailed with ease, a 120-108 shutout by all three judges (Julie Lederman, Tom Schreck and Steve Weisfeld).

The fight will be Donaire's last at bantamweight, as he plans to move up to 122 in 2012, where higher-profile bouts with the likes of Jorge Arce, Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. and Toshiaki Nishioka await him.

Narvaez plans to return to 115, where he is rated No. 1 by THE RING.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Bantamweight **LOCATION:** New York, N.Y.
VENUE: Theater at Madison Square Garden
TELEVISION: HBO **DATE:** Oct. 22, 2011
PROMOTER: Top Rank **REFEREE:** Benjy Esteves Jr. (New York)
NONITO DONAIRE AGE: 28 **WEIGHT:** 116 ½
RESIDENCE: San Leandro, Calif.
BIRTHPLACE: Talibon, Bohol, Philippines
RECORD: 27-1 (18) **RING RATING:** 1
OMAR NARVAEZ AGE: 36 **WEIGHT:** 117
RESIDENCE: Cordoba, Cordoba, Argentina
BIRTHPLACE: Trelew, Chubut, Argentina **RECORD:** 35-1-2 (19)

GRZEGORZ PROKSA TKO 3 SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER

Polish middleweight Grzegorz Proksa pulled off a shocking upset – not so much that he won, but the ease with which he did -- shellacking German contender Sebastian Syvlester, forcing the 31-year-old to retire on his stool before the start of the fourth round.

Proksa's crouching southpaw style gave the hometown fighter fits from the onset, easily landing straight-left leads that befuddled Sylvester.

As the bell tolled to signal the second round, it was clear that Proksa's confidence had grown – he landed one-two's at will and twisted and turned his torso to avoid his foe's shots with ease.

Blood began to pour from wounds on Sylvester's face as Proksa toyed with him, landing body shots and mixing it up to the head.

Proksa's speed was impressive, as he walked in with hands dangling at his sides – in the style of Sergio Martinez – dodging punches with his head and landing quick combinations.

He continued the assault in the third, mixing in left uppercuts and pushing Sylvester to the ropes.

Following the third stanza, Sylvester's corner stopped the bout, as the nasty gash over his right eye was spouting blood with no end in sight.

The victory over the middleweight mainstay vaults Proksa into the top five of THE RING's middleweight rankings and adds a fresh face to the dull middleweight mix.

Sylvester drops out of the rankings with the loss and will likely be out of action for a lengthy period as his wound heals.

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Middleweight **LOCATION:** Neubrandenburg, Germany
DATE: Oct. 1, 2011 **PROMOTERS:** Sauerland Event
REFEREE: Robin Dolpierre (France)
GRZEGORZ PROKSA AGE: 26 **WEIGHT:** 159 ½
RESIDENCE: Redhill, Surrey, UK **BIRTHPLACE:** Jaworzno, Poland
RECORD: 26-0 (19) **RING RANKING:** 4
SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER AGE: 31 **WEIGHT:** 159 ½
RESIDENCE: Greifswald, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany
BIRTHPLACE: Greifswald, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany
RECORD: 34-3-1 (16)

DANNY GARCIA SD 12 KENDALL HOLT

Danny Garcia stepped up to the toughest test of his young career in Kendall Holt and passed with flying colors, controlling the action for the majority of the contest.

It was an uneventful contest, as both fighters looked to counter, waiting for openings. There were a few good exchanges sprinkled throughout the bout, but never any sustained offense.

Holt controlled the first two rounds, but his younger, more active foe began to take over in the third, finding a home for his right hand and landing thudding shots to the body.

Garcia landed the harder blows and was able to wobble Holt a few times, but never came close to putting his foe on the canvas. He out-hustled Holt down the stretch for the biggest win of his career, graduating from prospect to contender.

Judge Wayne Hedgepath (New Jersey) turned in a peculiar scorecard in favor of the New Jersey native, overruled by Patrica Morse Jarman (Nevada) and Fritz Werner (California) who both scored it for Garcia, 117-111.

Garcia, ranked No. 9 by THE RING, will have plenty of options going forward in the loaded junior welterweight division.

Holt announced plans to move up to welterweight following the loss.

MATCH STATS
DIVISION: Junior Welterweight **LOCATION:** Los Angeles
VENUE: Staples Center **TELEVISION:** HBO PPV
DATE: Oct. 15, 2011 **PROMOTER:** Golden Boy Promotions and Gary Shaw Productions **REFEREE:** Jack Reiss (California)
DANNY GARCIA AGE: 23 **WEIGHT:** 139 ½
RESIDENCE: Philadelphia, Penn.
BIRTHPLACE: Philadelphia, Penn.
RECORD: 22-0 (14) **RING RANKING:** 9
KENDALL HOLT AGE: 30 **WEIGHT:** 139 ½
RESIDENCE: Paterson, N.J. **BIRTHPLACE:** Paterson, N.J.
RECORD: 27-3 (15)

IMAGE: WENDE WINFRIED MAUSOLF

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ VS. STEVE CUNNINGHAM

HEAVYWEIGHTS

ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO W 12 MICHAEL SPROTT
ALEXANDER USTINOV W 12 DENIS BAKHTOV
DARNELL WILSON W 10 JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ
TYE FIELDS KO 6 RAPHAEL BUTLER

CRUISERWEIGHTS

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ TECH. WIN 6 STEVE CUNNINGHAM
BJ FLORES W 10 PAUL JENNETTE
RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV KO 4 MICHAEL SIMMS
JUHO HAAPOJA W 12 FAISAL IBNEL ARRAMI
NURI SEFERI KO 3 TONY INGELREST

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

CHAD DAWSON KO 2 BERNARD HOPKINS
NATHAN CLEVERLY W 12 TONY BELLEW
KARO MURAT D 12 GABRIEL CAMPILLO
ANDRZEJ FONFARA KO 2 JOSE SPEARMAN
ISAAC CHILEMBA KO 2 JAMESON BOSTIC
DMITRY SUKHOTSKY KO 2 NADJIB MOHAMMEDI
TONY DODSON KO 7 DARREN STUBBS
ROBERTO FELICIANO BOLONTI KO 4 JOSE HILTON DOS SANTOS
SHAWN HAWK W 10 OTIS GRIFFIN
ROBIN KRASNIQI KO 4 ABDELKAHIM DERGHAL

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

EDWIN RODRIGUEZ W 10 WILL ROSINSKY
JAMES DEGALE W 12 PIOTR WILCZEWSKI
KHOREN GEVOR KO 6 OLEGS FEDOTOVS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

SERGIO MARTINEZ KO 11 DARREN BARKER
GRZEGORZ PROKSA TECH. WIN 3 SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER
ANDY LEE W 10 BRIAN VERA
DMITRY PIROG TECH. WIN 10 GENNADY MARTIROSYAN
OSUMANU ADAMA KO 9 ROMAN KARMAZIN
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE TECH. WIN 3 SAUL DURAN
GILBERTO RAMIREZ SANCHEZ KO 5 AMILCAR EDGARDO FUNES MELIAN
AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE KO 2 JASON LEHOULLIER
CHRISTINA HAMMER W 10 VASHON LIVING
BILLI FACUNDO GODOY TECH. WIN 4 CLAUDIO ARIEL ABALOS
MEHDI BOUADLA W 12 SAMIR DOS SANTOS BARBOSA

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS (LIGHT MIDDLEWEIGHT)

ANTHONY MUNDINE W 12 RIGOBERTO ALVAREZ
YUDEL JHONSON KO 3 EDUARDO MERCEDES
DAMIAN JONAK W 10 ALEX BUNEMA

WELTERWEIGHTS

KELL BROOK KO 6 RAFAL JACKIEWICZ
PAUL MALIGNAGGI W 10 ORLANDO LORA
FREDDY HERNANDEZ W 10 LUIS COLLAZO
DAMIAN FRIAS KO 9 HENRY CRAWFORD
CHRIS VAN HEERDEN W 12 KAIZER MABUZA
ANNE SOPHIE MATHIS W 10 CINDY SERRANO
YOSHIHIRO KAMEGAI KO 6 HECTOR MUNOZ

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS (LIGHT WELTERWEIGHT)

DANNY GARCIA W 12 KENDALL HOLT
MARCOS MAIDANA KO 4 PETR PETROV
PRAWET SINGWANCHA W 12 KOSUKE IWASHITA
ALBERTO MOSQUERA D 12 BRUNET ZAMORA
DENIS SHAFIKOV TECH. WIN 8 GIUSEPPE LAURI
LUIS RAMOS JR KO 5 DAVID RODELA
LEE MCALLISTER KO 3 KAROLY LAKATOS
KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV TECH WIN 6 NATE CAMPBELL
AJOSE OLUSEGUN W 12 ALI CHEBAH
VERNON PARIS W 8 RUBEN GALVAN

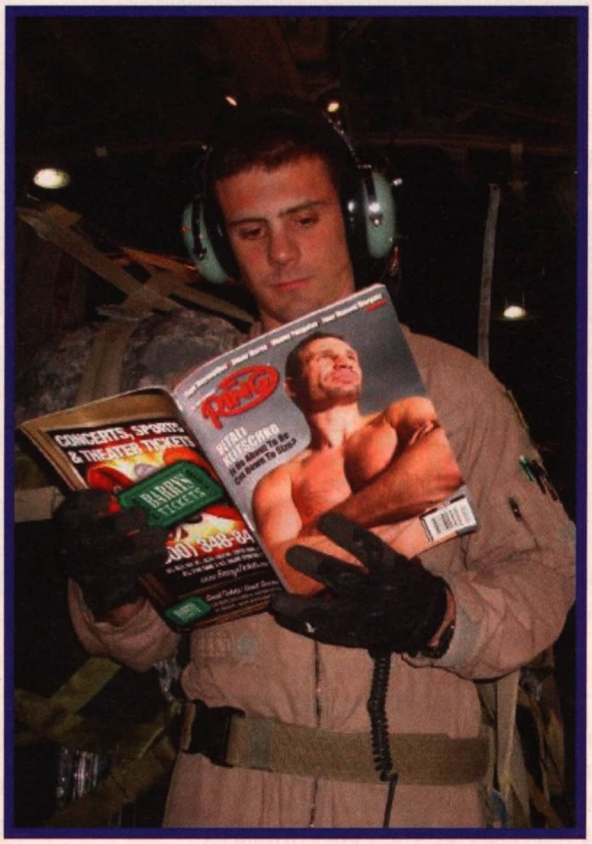
LIGHTWEIGHTS

ANTONIO DEMARCO KO 11 JORGE LINARES
RICHARD ABRIL W 12 MIGUEL ACOSTA
MIGUEL ACOSTA KO 3 LUIS CARDOZO
PAULUS MOSES W 10 SIDNEY SIQUEIRA

ADOPT A SOLDIER!

Help support our troops and their families by sending them a 1-YEAR GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO THE RING MAGAZINE

containing 128 pages of photos, commentary, and award-winning boxing analysis every month.



The Ring Magazine is proud to support American troops serving their country around the world through its new Adopt A Soldier campaign. Purchase a 1-year subscription to The Ring at the discounted rate of $49.95 and **10% of every subscription will be divided among the following 3 military charities:**

NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION

FISHER HOUSE — HELPING MILITARY FAMILIES

Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund

Soldiers' Angels

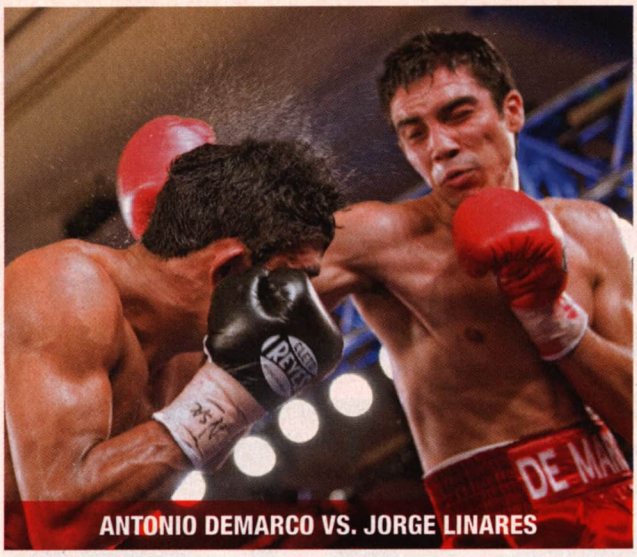
Don't know a soldier? No problem! Through our partnership with Soldiers' Angels, you can purchase as many subscriptions as you'd like, and they will be assigned randomly to active US Military Personnel on deployment worldwide. So, buy 10 subscriptions and help 10 soldiers by giving them something to look forward to every month! As part of this program, Soldiers' Angels can provide the name and mailing address of each soldier receiving your gift subscription so that you can maintain contact with your newly adopted soldier!

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AND ADOPT A SOLDIER TODAY!

2 WAYS TO ORDER

Call **1-800-846-6438** or request an order form from **thering@emailcustomerservice.com**

OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2011.



ANTONIO DEMARCO VS. JORGE LINARES

VICENTE ESCOBEDO W 10 ROCKY JUAREZ
SHARIF BOGERE KO 3 FRANCISCO CONTRERAS
DARLEY PEREZ TECH. WIN 6 OSCAR MEZA
EDNER CHERRY NC 1 ERIC AIKEN
DANIEL ESTRADA TECH. WIN 11 RENE GONZALEZ
OSCAR CORTES KO 9 MANUEL AGUILAR
GAVIN REES TECH. DRAW 4 DERRY MATHEWS
NIHITO ARAKAWA W 12 JAY SOLMIANO
MARCELINO NICOLAS LOPEZ KO 7 FABIAN MARIMON

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS (SUPER FEATHERWEIGHT)

ROMAN MARTINEZ KO 6 DANIEL ATTAH
ROBERTO GONZALES W 10 BALWEG BANGOYAN
DANTE JARDON KO 7 RICKY SISMUNDO
MAHONRI MONTES KO 8 CARLOS WISTON VELASQUEZ
GARY BUCKLAND W 12 GARY SYKES
RONNY RIOS W 8 ROGER GONZALEZ
LOGAN MCGUINNESS KO 11 BENOIT GAUDET
ALEJANDRO SANABRIA W 10 PEDRO NAVARRETE

FEATHERWEIGHTS

MIGUEL ANGEL GARCIA KO 4 JUAN CARLOS MARTINEZ
JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ KO 2 MIKE OLIVER
ALEXANDER MISKIRTCHIAN W 12 SOFIANE TAKOUCHT
PADJAI YONGYUTHGYM KO 4 RUEL SUYA
MICHAEL FARENAS W 12 EDGAR GABEJAN
CELESTINO CABALLERO W 12 JONATHAN VICTOR BARROS
MIGUEL BELTRAN JR W 8 SERGIO PEREZ

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS (SUPER BANTAMWEIGHT)

TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA W 12 RAFAEL MARQUEZ
JORGE ARCE KO 4 SIMPHIWE NONGQAYI
VICTOR TERRAZAS KO 4 EDUARDO BECERRIL
NEHOMAR CERMENO D 8 YOANDRIS SALINAS
JONATHAN OQUENDO KO 2 JOSE LUIS ARAIZA
YESICA PATRICIA MARCOS TECH. WIN 5 SIMONE DA SILVA DUARTE
ANA JULATON W 10 JESSICA VILLAFRANCA
MASAAKI SERIE KO 6 HAYATO HASHIMOTO
JESSIE ALBARACIN KO 5 MARVIN TAMPUS
NINO MAGBOO KO 8 RENE BESTUDIO

BANTAMWEIGHTS

NONITO DONAIRE W 12 OMAR ANDRES NARVAEZ
HUGO RUIZ KO 4 FRANCISCO ARCE
MALCOLM TUNACAO KO 4 CHATPETCH SITHMORSENG
DRIAN FRANCISCO W 10 MICHAEL DOMINGO
LUCAS ANTONIO CARRANZA KO 12 SEBASTIAN DANIEL RODRIGUEZ
AJ BANAL W 12 MARIO BRIONES
PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU KO 2 NATHAN BOLCIO
JANETH PEREZ W 10 YANINA NATALIA ACUNA

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS (SUPER FLYWEIGHT)

RODRIGO GUERRERO TECH. WIN 6 RAUL MARTINEZ
DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT W 12 EDISON BERWELA
CARLOS CUADRAS KO 2 JOHNNY GARCIA
SYLVESTER LOPEZ KO 8 OSCAR IBARRA
DAIKI KAMEDA KO 1 RAUL HIDALGO
JOSE SALGADO KO 2 RICARDO ARMENTA
ANA MARIA TORRES W 10 MARISA JOHANNA PORTILLO
MARCO DEMECILLO KO 9 LOWIE BANTIGUE
DANIEL ROSAS D 12 JOSE CABRERA

FLYWEIGHTS

PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM W 12 EDGAR SOSA
JOHNRIEL CASIMERO KO 2 ROEMART SENTILLAS
SUSI KENTIKIAN W 10 TEERAPORN PANNIMIT

JR. FLYWEIGHTS (LIGHT FLYWEIGHT)

ROMAN GONZALEZ KO 2 OMAR SOTO
DONNIE NIETES W 12 RAMON GARCIA HIRALES
RYO MIYAZAKI KO 4 JERSON MANCIO
NETHRA SASIPRAPA KO 2 DOMI NENOKEBA
YESICA YOLANDA BOPP W 10 DANIELA ROMINA BERMUDEZ
ADRIAN HERNANDEZ KO 2 GIDEON BUTHELEZI
LUIS CEJA KO 5 ULISES LARA
SAMMY GUTIERREZ KO 5 ROILO GOLEZ
JONATHAN TACONING W 12 NGAOPRAJAN CHUWATANA

STRAWWEIGHTS (MINIMUMWEIGHT)

DENVER CUELLO KO 1 CARLOS PEREZ
HEKKIE BUDLER W 12 MICHAEL LANDERO
MERLITO SABILLO W 12 RODEL TEJARES

IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

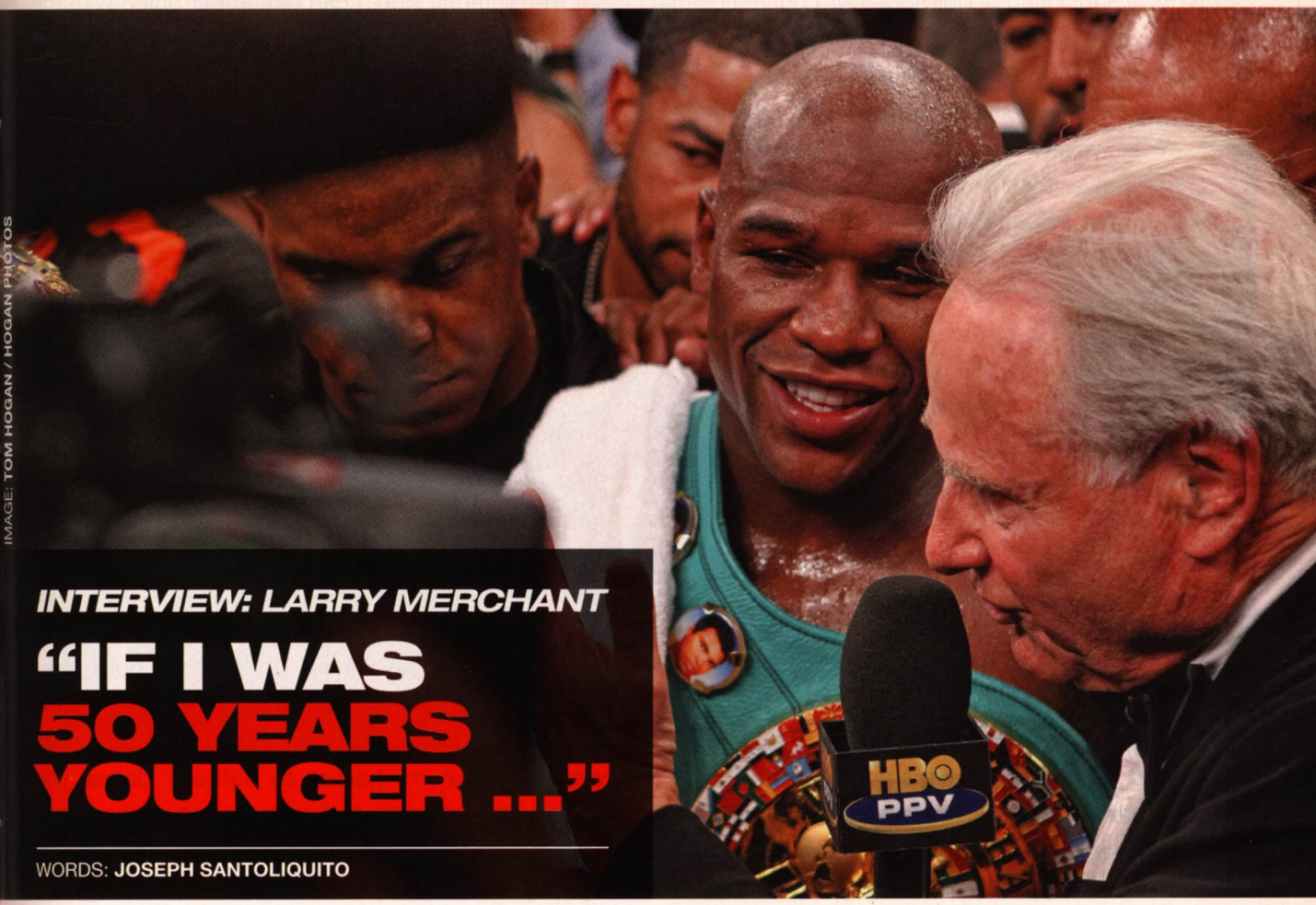


IMAGE: TOM HOGAN / HOGAN PHOTOS

INTERVIEW: LARRY MERCHANT

"IF I WAS 50 YEARS YOUNGER ..."

WORDS: **JOSEPH SANTOLIQUITO**

We're used to him coming through our TV screen in measured, rhythmic tones. Hall of Fame commentator Larry Merchant has been part of this generation's boxing lexicon since HBO began broadcasting fights. Merchant brings a clever, old-school sports columnist's charm each time he speaks – a rare, august air at ringside that fight fans might never see again.

What no one expected to see was the pugnacious side of Merchant after the mid-September Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz fight. "Money May" flipped out on Merchant when the HBO analyst challenged him about the controversial ending of the fight, prompting Merchant to respond, "If I was 50 years younger, I'd kick your ass."

The remark created a firestorm on the internet and in boxing chat rooms throughout the world. Mayweather never backed off from his stance that "HBO should fire [Merchant]," nor has Merchant backed away, either.

What Mayweather probably doesn't know is that the Merchant of 50 years ago could have very well flattened him. Merchant remembers, bemusedly, drawing a 15-yard penalty on his first varsity football play at Ebbets Field, for hitting a little too enthusiastically as a hard-nosed defensive back for Lafayette High School. He grew up on the rough streets in the Bronx, N.Y., and had a few scraps here and there in his youth. What the public witnessed on national TV Sept. 17 was a part of Merchant not many know.

We know quite a bit about you, but we don't know much about your background?

I was born in 1931 in New York City, lived in the Bronx and Manhattan, went to Lafayette High School in Brooklyn. I'm the oldest of three, which made me a first child, grandchild, nephew, which resulted in a lot of attention. I was given a lot of freedom to go and see and do. I loved all sports, played football best. I

went off to college, half a continent away, before I was 17. I had a kind of oblivious self-confidence that things would always work out.

What position did you play?

I was a fullback/cornerback. We were unbeaten in my senior year. I went to Oklahoma, which wasn't a major power then but was about to become one. I was on the freshmen team and played the bench as a sophomore, including a Sugar Bowl, under Bud Wilkinson. I injured my shoulder in practice – I can still feel it if I fall asleep awkwardly – and started journalism school. I decided the pressbox was more suitable to my talent *(laughs)*.

How was that to give up football?

Football was a deep part of who I was. I cried for a few days and got over it. But I went back to it as a backfield coach for three seasons at Lafayette. An assistant coach at OU gave me a playbook with his personal notes. We installed the Oklahoma offense and had dominant championship teams. My high school coach, Harry Ostro, is 96 or 97 and probably still doing pushups *(laughs)*. As I do.

What kind of player were you?

I was a better player on defense. Dan Jenkins used to write for *Sports Illustrated* and we were covering a Cotton Bowl together and he told me he had asked Darrell Royal, who was then the coach at Texas, what kind of player I was, and Royal told him, "He'd go after you" *(laughs)*. I told Dan that I wouldn't always catch you, but I would go after you *(laughs)*. I loved to hit.

What did your father do?

My father ran a little family laundry in Greenwich Village that was started by his parents. He played baseball in high school. My maternal grandfather was a longshoreman. From the ages of about 10 to 12 I'd travel on the subway alone for an hour on Saturdays to help my father out. I was raised during "The Great Depression." But I wasn't depressed *(laughs)*. I was too young. I didn't know much about it. I had a happy childhood, but I was hardly raised with a golden spoon in my mouth.

You came up under some gritty circumstances then.

My recollection of my childhood was always seeing my father on Sundays, because he left for work before I got up, and came home after I went to sleep. They were hard times, and everybody worked hard. On my maternal side, I can remember going with my uncle for something called home relief, which was to get a box of food from the government. My maternal grandmother was a great cook. My mother was a legal secretary, when few married women went to work.

How did your early years shape you?

Of course all of those experiences shape you. My father was a serious sports fan. He took a job as a teenager as an usher at Madison Square Garden, so he could watch the fights *(laughs)*. We went to a lot of baseball games at Yankees Stadium. I had uncles who took me to ballgames and took me fishing.

When I was around 13, an uncle who was an amateur fighter took me to the Garden to see a fight for the first time. I remember it was decent seat, and it was a lightweight fight between a kid from Canada and a kid from Queens. Good scrap. Next day I read in the newspaper that one of them threw up in his corner. It was a revelation. Things were going on I couldn't see. I had to find a way to get closer to the ring *(laughs)*. I wasn't fully conscious of it, but writers were as much my heroes as fighters. Unless you listened to a fight on the radio, usually a Joe Louis fight, newspaper reports were my experience of prize fighting. That's how you found out about the fights.

I'm assuming you've witnessed live some incredible things being in New York?

I did. I was at Yankees Stadium the day Lou Gehrig made his famous "I'm the luckiest man on the face of the earth" speech. I was about 9 or 10, and I knew he had retired and that he was sick, but I wasn't fully aware that he was dying. People were very somber, and I just didn't fully get that. I was a kid. I can still remember Gehrig standing there. I was in the lower stands, and I remember it being a dark day. I remember the lineups of players out there, and there was this light peering right down on Gehrig.

I was also there when Babe Ruth made his farewell speech at Yankees Stadium, when he said "Baseball is the greatest game ever invented." I remember seeing him as a kid as a first base coach for the Brooklyn Dodgers. They put him on first base, maybe as a publicity stunt, for a month or two as a coach. Those memories are there. I was a street urchin baseball sophisticate. I knew all the batting

IMAGE: JEFF JULIAN / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

Larry Merchant (third from right) was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2009.

averages day to day. If the Yankees lost but Joe DiMaggio got a hit, it was a good day.

I'm assuming you were a great student. Were you?

I was a little precocious perhaps in writing, because I loved to read. I was a good enough student to skip three grades, which is what they did in those days and which is why I graduated so young. But I was less than stellar in the area of "conduct." I guess even then I was a bit of a troublemaker. My mother would ask about those C's and D's, but must have thought some mischief was OK because she never made a fuss about it. When I was maybe seven, I had a skirmish with a few bigger kids and ran into an alley and called up to my mother and said they were picking on me. She leaned out of the window and yelled, "Fight your own battles (laughs)." I learned early in life, you have to fight your battles *(laughs)*.

Would you consider yourself a tough kid growing up?

I wasn't a tough kid *(laughs)*. I just played ball from sun up until sun down, no matter what the season was. If I didn't get home for lunch, it was OK. But I was smart enough to show up for dinner *(laughs)*.

Did your parents have aspirations for you?

My parents hoped I would grow up to be a professional in something. They never directed me anywhere. My father went to night school at NYU, but no one in the family had gone to college or completed college, anything like that. They had aspirations that I would go to college. I did too. I knew I wasn't going into the laundry business.

But the writers were your heroes?

Yes, they were. Red Smith was our god, then there was Jimmy Cannon, John Lardner, who wrote a column in Newsweek, another wonderful writer; A.J. Liebling in the New Yorker; there was Dan Parker, who sort of informed us that the best writing in the newspaper came generally in the sports sections. They had the most freedom. They were stylists. Some of them were just beautiful writers, and that was one of the attractions of going into journalism for me -- how well these guys wrote, and how vividly they wrote, and how funny some of them can be.

Who was your favorite fighter growing up?

Growing up in the 1930s and '40s, all you knew was

IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the President and Joe Louis was the heavyweight champion. I also became aware of fighters like Sugar Ray Robinson and Henry Armstrong and their fights would sometimes be on the radio. But Louis blocked out the sun in terms of how big he was. Louis was the first Afro-American hero in America. He was the crossover of all crossovers. There have been many black artists and performers, particularly in the jazz age, but Joe Louis the heavyweight champion of the world, was considered the strongest man in the world. That became more apparent after his second fight with Max Schmeling. Everyone was fearful that World War II was about to happen and we would get drawn into war and that Adolf Hitler was such a megalomaniac who had the history of the 1936 Olympics, spurning Jesse Owens – and here comes Joe Louis.

Louis came from the deepest South where segregation was alive and unwell. He was a national hero to kids, to everyone. I just happened to grow up in the center of the sports world, New York, where the great writers all wanted to be. It was a cultural center and a sports center.

What led you to journalism?

My parents didn't understand why I went to journalism school, and they tried to figure how you make a living out of that *(laughs)*. But what I think helped me was my senior year at Oklahoma, I was sports editor and editor of the school daily. My senior year, I wrote a piece for *Sport Magazine* on Billy Vessels, who was becoming the Heisman Trophy award winner. I got paid $250, which was a lot of money at that time, and my parents took a deep breath and maybe they thought I could make it *(laughs)*. But my first job was as sports editor of the *Wilmington News*, in Wilmington, N.C. I wrote a lot about fishing, what they caught and what they caught it with. I'd go fishing with Captain Eddie for sailfish. That sort of stuff *(laughs)*.

I was 23, a one-man sports staff. I have vivid recollections of that time. Then an interesting thing happened. I was there for just three or four months, because I used a photo of a black second baseman in the sports section. When I picked up the newspaper later that day, where that photo had been was a blank space. When I went into the office the

next morning, the managing editor took me aside and said, "If Jackie Robinson hits five home runs in a game, you can put his photo in the paper, otherwise we do not have photos of Negroes in the newspaper." When I went back to my apartment, I got a big jar and started to fill it with my change every night. When it was filled a few weeks later, I bought a tank of gas and left town. That was it. I went back home and got a job at *The Associated Press*, and went from there to the *Philadelphia Daily News* as an assistant photo editor around 1955.

Your big break came soon afterward, right?

There was a lot of transition going on at *The Daily News*. I was in the generation that looked at sports differently. *The Daily News* was housecleaning for financial reasons, and they made me sports editor. I was 26 and reflected a newish sensibility, heightened by TV -- we assumed that fans knew the score when they picked up the newspaper. We wrote about the sports scene and what was behind it, about the athletes as personalities and people as well as athletes. My column was called "Fun and Games" to convey the idea that it isn't life and death for us, that it's entertainment we are passionate about.

Like what you and Floyd Mayweather provided?

(Laughs) This is the world of modern communication. By the time I was out of the ring, it was around the world three times *(laughs)*. I'm getting messages on the internet -- and an hour later, there was this poster up of Mayweather vs. Merchant, 1961 *(laughs)*. Guys were selling T-shirts saying, "If I was 50 years younger ... *(laughs)*." Most of the feedback I received was positive, some of it on the internet wasn't.

It was a moment of spontaneous combustion. I wish I was smart enough to plan something like that, but I'm not *(laughs)*. So it was a 15-minutes-of-fame thing, and I was in the merry-go-round for a few days there, and then it slowed down and I got off. There have been numbers of occasions when athletes have gotten hot with me, and I'd let them go on, and "Back to you Jim" and let viewers decide for themselves what they just saw and heard. But this was different. This was a personal attack. If what he did was legally sucker punch Ortiz, he was doing a variation of that of the same thing on me. He tried sucker punching me, and I counter punched. I had no idea it was coming and was amazed afterwards that it came.

I would like to point out that Mayweather has had these kinds of meltdowns with other people, too. He exploded on Brian Kenny, from ESPN, who is one of the most knowledgeable boxing people I've run across. This time it happened at the end of a fight. The crowd was incendiary. It was explosive, there was a lot of angry voices that wanted answers. I think he realized that whatever he did was legal, he wasn't going to get the credit he always craves. And he went off. And I did. He never tried to apologize. To the contrary, he went to the press conference and reinstated his position about HBO firing me *(laughs)*.

Will you have any misgivings about entering the ring again after a Mayweather fight to do the postfight interview?

I will give Mayweather a rematch provided the terms are right (laughs). With him, you never know how long it will take for him to fight again. Who knows whether or not it will be my turn to cover a Mayweather fight.

Is there anything different that you would do? I have a sense that Lafayette High defensive back came raging out.

I can't deny it's part of who I am. It's like the crowd had an honest reaction to what they saw. They don't read the fine print of the rules. It's not on the back of a ticket stub. They saw one guy hit another guy who was looking away. They reacted with an honest emotion to it. It was legal and that was on Ortiz. He likes to turn his cheek to everything outside the ring, to stave off negative vibes, but you can't do that inside the ring, and he paid the price for it. I'm not going to second guess the reaction of the crowd or second guess my reaction, which was a human response to being attacked. The aftermath was just a giggle. TMZ, which I had barely heard of, is intercepting me at the airport and restaurants *(laughs)*. I treated it as Mayweather never laid a glove on me. I'm just a guy babbling about the fights and the fighters. I'm just another bit player in Floyd Mayweather's reality show *(laughs)*.

How much longer do you see yourself doing this?

As long as I love doing it, I'm able to do it *(laughs)*, and as long as they'll have me. I've had an amazing run, and I'm still standing, still here, still crazy after all these years. ■

Referee Russell Mora acknowledges that he had a bad night in the Abner Mares-Joseph Agbeko fight but tried to learn from it.

REFEREE RUSSELL MORA LOOKS BACK ON HIS 'BAD NIGHT'

WORDS: **CHUCK GIAMPA / IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA**

"I've always wanted to be written about in THE RING Magazine … but never like this" referee Russell Mora told me recently.

Mora was heavily criticized in the media and among fans for his handling the Abner Mares-Joseph Agbeko fight on Aug. 13 in Las Vegas. Mares, who won by decision, appeared to land numerous low blows throughout the fight but was never penalized.

Here are Mora's thoughts on that night and the subsequent fall out:

You mentioned the articles written about your performance in the Mares-Agbeko fight that appeared in *THE RING* Magazine and just about every boxing Web site. Tell me what you experienced immediately after that fight and during the following weeks.

I had mixed feelings. I realized that I had a bad night. I got lost on the punches on the beltline. I may have overcompensated from my performance in the (Robert) Guerrero-(Michael) Katsidis fight, when I deducted a point too soon.

Did you receive phone calls from other officials during the week after the fight?

Yes, I did. I received a call from Richard Steele, who

told me "welcome to the club." Richard also talked to me about the importance of re-focusing on my technique. I also received a call from (former Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director) Marc Ratner, who told me that officials all go through a bad night. He stressed that I have to go with what got me to be a referee. That fight does not define me. Marc also talked about the importance of having more communication with the fighter's cornermen after I turn in the scorecards to the commission after each round ... and to utilize the team of officials at ringside, such as the inspectors, the doctors and the commission.

What did other referees and judges tell you? Did they acknowledge that you did have a bad night?

Yes, they did but they were all very supportive since most of the veteran officials had experienced similar performances in the past. Referee Jay Nady talked to me about being more direct with the fighters about exactly where the beltline is. He emphasized that it is my job as a referee to make that clear to the fighters.

Did you work on the technical part of refereeing?

Yes, (referee) Joe Cortez and I worked in the ring. I practiced refereeing from my gut and not to overthink or overanalyze the action. Joe, (referee) Kenny Bayless and I came to the conclusion that during the Mares-Agbeko fight I was positioned too close to the fighters to see the beltline, and that if I took a step or two back from the action, I would have a better view.

Did you go back to basics and work on **anything else in these sessions?**

Yes. I am focusing more on a fighter who gets knocked down. After the knock down, I take my time to analyze the fighter when he gets up and when I ask him to walk toward me. I direct my focus on his total condition such as his eyes and how he moves to me.

So with all of this preparation, how did you feel refereeing your fights several weeks ago? Were you thinking of the Mares-Agbeko fight?

No, I didn't think about that fight. I was a little nervous prior to the next fight but everything went well.

It seems that the experience forced you to re-evaluate your mental and technical skills.

It did. After my most -recent fight, I felt that 100 pounds were lifted off my shoulders. I have my confidence back.

* * *

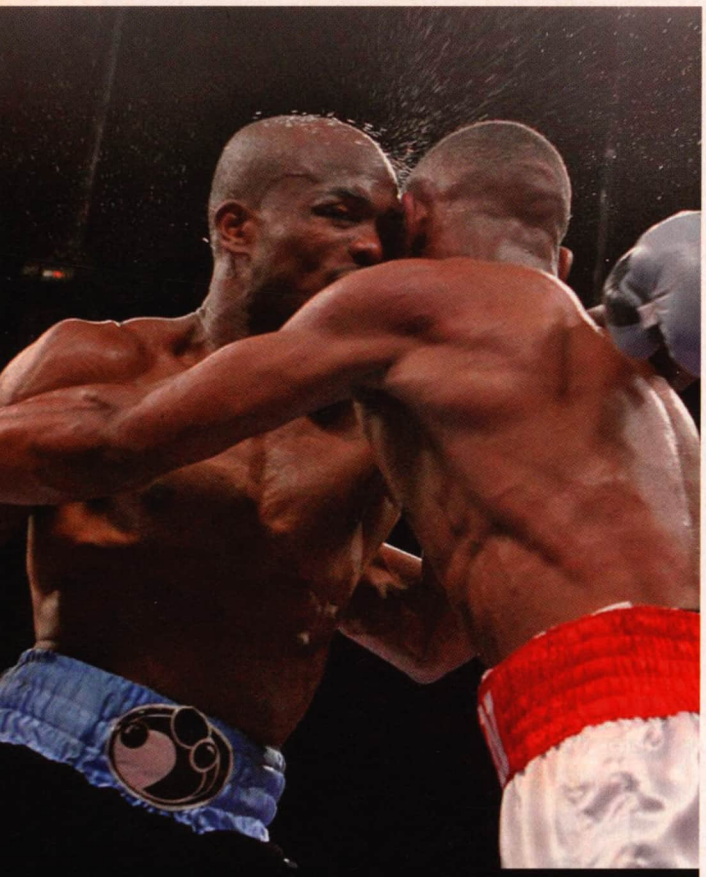
Every official will have an "off night" if he or she remains in the business long enough. The most important fight for an official is the one immediately after a poor performance because he or she does not want two bad performances in a row. The longer an official waits for his next fight, the more doubt he develops in his ability.

Some officials will have several poor performances as they approach the end of their careers. That may be the time to retire. A poor performance might also indicate that the official should merely get back to basics. This is what Mora did.

I don't agree with Mora's handling of the Mares-Agbeko fight. However, we are often quick to criticise without following up on what some officials do to determine what went wrong, refine their skills and regain their confidence. Sometimes it takes a poor performance to make a better official if he is willing to be honest with himself. ■

Chuck Giampa can be reached at chuckgiampa@aol.com

BY DR. MARGARET GOODMAN



A clash of heads ended the Timothy Bradley (left)-Devon Alexander fight prematurely.

HEAD BUTTS: THE MEANS TO AN UNSATISFYING END

IMAGE: **DAVID MARTIN-WARR FOR DON KING PRODUCTIONS**

Head butts, whether accidental or intentional, can change fights in an instant.

Ask Devon Alexander, who lost his perfect record and 140-pound title in January when he was unable to see following an accidental butt by Timothy Bradley in the 10th round. Or ask Mike Tyson, who endured two severe accidental butts in Rounds 6 and 7 of his first fight with Evander Holyfield, leaving Tyson defenseless to legal blows that finished him in the 11th.

And it's not difficult to understand their devastating effect when you consider old-fashioned physics.

The laws of motion described in the late 1600s by Sir Isaac Newton, one of most celebrated physicists of all time, actually explain the mechanics of head-butt injuries. The impairment caused by a head butt is based on: (1) the acceleration rate (change in velocity) at which the head travels; (2) the deceleration (slowing) speed once the opponent's head is struck; and (3) the boxer's mass (weight). This force, along with the direction of the butt, determines the severity and type of injury (possibly a cut or concussion).

Cuts from butts are almost always deeper, more irregular and larger than those from a punch. They frequently occur in places such as the forehead or scalp, where a punch would never produce a cut.

Said respected Chief Maryland Ring Physician and neurologist Dr John Stiller: "I believe boxing glove to head vs. head to head is less likely to cause cuts because the boxing glove is more compliant – dissipates the force, and decreases the risk to the soft tissues of the face as compared to head vs. head, where the soft tissues of the face are at greater risk."

Television analyst and writer, Steve Farhood agrees.

"The bloodiest fight we ever had in 10 years on ShoBox was this year: Sharif Bogere-Ray Beltran. All the cuts were the result of head butts, and all the butts were unintentional."

Although we tend to believe that no boxer reacts to pain when they are in the heat of a fight, a bony skull striking your face or head certainly hurts more than a glove. In 2009, former welterweight champ Vivian Harris collapsed after an unintentional head butt in the second round against Noe Bolanos on ESPN's *Friday Night Fights*. Harris' post-fight brain scan was normal, so it is likely he passed out from excruciating pain.

Following his loss, Alexander told the press, "You can't work in the gym for a head butt. You can't train to get head butted and get your eye all messed up. You can train for what game plan your coach has set down for you." Alexander's trainer, Kevin Cunningham, warned Michigan referee Frank Garza that Bradley leads with his head, but it is the element of surprise that makes a head butt unavoidable.

Garza had no option other than to stop the

ALTHOUGH WE TRADITIONALLY DON'T ASSOCIATE HEAD BUTTS WITH A CONCUSSION, **THE SERIOUSNESS OF EVEN AN UNINTENTIONAL BUTT CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED.**

Alexander fight when the fighter said he couldn't see from the flow of blood. If a boxer says he can't see, whether from blood in his eye or potential damage to the eye itself, game over! In this instance, it was the athlete's inexperience with cuts that lost him the fight. And while I agree with Alexander that a boxer can't train for a butt, not enough trainers have their boxers prepare should they have to fight with a swollen eye socket or blood in one eye. Has no one thought of sparring with an eye patch as a training tool?

Although we traditionally don't associate head butts with a concussion, the seriousness of even an unintentional butt cannot be overlooked. I have always believed that Shane Mosley's poor performance against Vernon Forrest in their first fight could be attributed in part to a clash of heads in the second round.

Indeed, the head can be a very dangerous weapon. In a 2007 issue of *Police: The Law Enforcement Magazine*, Michael T. Rayburn discusses the effectiveness of head butts as a second line of defense when deadly force or counter strikes don't work and one needs to end a fight as quickly as possible.

No one has studied the concussion-producing effects of head butts in boxing, but they have in other sports. A 2002 Erasmus University study of soccer, in which heading the ball is an integral part of game, determined that almost 50 percent of players incurred some form of concussion during their career and that an accumulation of headers during one season placed players at risk for memory impairment.

Intentional head butts must be dealt with harshly to create a deterrent. Referee Joe Cortez ruled that Victor Ortiz's head butt of Floyd Mayweather Jr. was intentional but docked him only one point, which sent the wrong message to all fighters.

"Intentional butts are usually obvious to both the referee and the fans," Farhood said. "I believe a ref should deduct two points for an intentional foul and then determine the extent of the injury, if there is one. If the doctor rules that the injured fighter can't go on [regardless of whether that determination is made at the moment or in the subsequent round], the fight should go to the scorecards. If the injured fighter is ahead, he wins. If he's behind, the bout should be ruled a technical draw."

Then there's the issue of distinguishing between a punch and a head butt, which isn't always easy.

Farhood believes that boxing needs to catch up with technology and that instant replay can be implemented to make that determintion when a fight is filmed or televised. Instant replay can also help determine whether a butt was intentional.

"The producer and director in the TV truck usually know whether it was a punch or butt before the referee, doctors, the TV announcers, the fans or anybody else," Farhood said.

In boxing, all too often the referee and physician approach a head butt superficially – looking only for a cut. The physician should also assess the athlete for concussion between rounds or right after the butt occurs. It is a tough sell to the fans, but if the athlete is concussed, he shouldn't be allowed to continue.

Lastly, a serious butt should also be taken into account when giving a medical suspension – time off before a fighter is allowed to resume training or schedule another bout. Too often, boxers receive insufficient time off after a tough fight. Absorbing one or more head butts during the course of a bout increases the need for additional rest. ■

IMAGES: CHRIS COZZONE FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Holly Holm relishes the elusive opportunity to take part in a truly meaningful fight.

HOLLY HOLM

QUEEN OF THE RING EMBRACES LONG AWAITED CHALLENGE

WORDS: **JAKE DONOVAN**

Holly Holm is widely recognized as the best female fighter in the world pound for pound, but don't expect her to do a series of back flips upon hearing that. For the 30-year-young southpaw boxer, it's not about where she's at but the direction in which she's heading.

The daughter of a preacher, Holm knows better than anyone that what appears to be a dead-end is often a call for patience. Her patience has been tested to the point where she has eyed careers in other combat sports in order to maintain her hunger, going so far as to make her mixed martial arts debut this past March.

Now comes the payoff for staying ready, though. She is preparing for what is billed as her biggest and toughest challenge to date, a matchup with 5-foot-11 (180cm) French powerhouse Anne Sophie Mathis in a 12-round welterweight bout Dec. 2 in Holm's hometown of Albuquerque, N.M.

"I am super excited for this challenge," Holm said, sounding a bit like a kid in a candy store. "This fight is going to be completely different. She's the tallest, biggest fighter I've ever been in with. She's tough and headstrong in a good way. It's a true challenge for both of us. It adds that extra pressure – in a good way."

The pressure to which Holm (30-1-3, 9 knockouts) refers is looking good against a fighter who forgot what it's like to lose. Mathis (25-1, 21 KOs) turned pro as a teenager, losing her second fight before

disappearing for eight years. She hasn't lost since returning to the ring in 2003, a run that mirrors the career of Holm, whose lone defeat came seven years and 25 fights ago.

Holm's unbeaten run since then – 23-0-1 (6 KOs) – includes wins over such female standouts as Christy Martin, Mia St. John and Mary Jo Sanders in a career that continues to span several weight classes.

Her victory over then-unbeaten Sanders was considered a passing of the torch from the sport's best. However, the following three years has served as a frustrating reminder that such labels don't translate into paydays that even approach top-tier male boxers.

the way Holm does things, though. In fact, news of securing the fight against Mathis came just weeks after her second [illegible] September.

Remaining [illegible] while pursuing the best challenges [illegible] beginning to pay dividends. A win over Mathis in December could lead to another big fight, against unbeaten Cecilia Braekhus of Norway early next year in a fight that also would have pound-for-pound implications.

Of course, that fight would be contingent on Holm beating Mathis, who has a three-inch height advantage and a significant edge in pure punching power. That challenge and what might lie ahead are

"I JUST ALWAYS WANT TO WIN. THAT SHOULD BE THE MINDSET OF ANY FIGHTER,"

"I'm grateful because I'm one of the few (female) fighters who can afford to live on fighting alone," Holm states. "At the same time, it's frustrating because we put in so much more work, yet at a fraction of the pay. If you're a top male boxer, you get paid a lot more. It's just the way it is."

Holm does what few fighters of either gender can do -- pack 'em in every time she fights, in her case almost exclusively in the Albuquerque area. Still, she hasn't been able to take the next step.

"She's taken advantage of every opportunity available and is a great role model in her community," states Lenny Frezquez, who has promoted Holm as a boxer and MMA fighter. "But the TV networks that can pay what she deserves – HBO and Showtime – aren't interested in women's boxing. It doesn't have anything to do with her; they just don't showcase the sport."

Waiting for the circus to come to town has never been enough to keep Holm motivated.

And if such fights also happen to generate greater interest among women's boxing, she says, then so be it. Ultimately, though, Holm is content with simply living up to her full potential.

"I just always want to win. That should be the mindset of any fighter," Holm said. "If what I achieve does something for women's boxing, that's great. We want the sport to go further. But I have to win for me. That's what works, that's what drives me.

"If that drive helps to make a positive impact for the sport of women's boxing, then that tells me they see me as a true fighter." ■

Jake Donovan is the Managing Editor of **Boxingscene.com**. Follow Jake on Twitter at **twitter.com/JakeNDaBox** or submit questions/comments to **JakeNDaBox@gmail.com.**

WILL WE FI[illegible]LAND THE **BIG ONE** IN 2012?

WORDS: **MIKE COPPINGE**

Since Manny Pacquiao's rise to 147 pounds, the only fight that has truly mattered in boxing is an encounter between "Pacman" and "Money." As we went to press, the Filipino dynamo was gearing up for a third bout with Mexican rival Juan Manuel Marquez. If he prevailed, as expected, talk will have turned once again to the richest and most-important bout that can be made in the sport – Manny Pacquiao vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr.

With Mayweather having just fought a welterweight southpaw in September – a fourth round KO of Victor Ortiz – and with no fights scheduled, it would seem the stars are once again aligned for a superfight with Pacquiao. As has been the case for more than two years, various forces have combined to keep the event from happening, but with both fighters steadily aging, it might be now or never.

As it stands, 2012 could be the year of the rematch, with several compelling fights on the horizon.

Chad Dawson and Jean Pascal engaged in an entertaining battle before a feverish crowd in Montreal in the summer of 2010. With both fighters having now fought the legendary Bernard Hopkins, there is a good chance the rematch will happen in the coming year. Sources advised THE RING late in October that preliminary talks between the camps of Pascal and Dawson had begun.

In April 2010, Andre Berto and Ortiz waged war in a welterweight slugfest. Both fighters hit the deck twice, once each in an unforgettable sixth round.

Ortiz, making his welterweight debut, ultimately handing Berto his first loss by a unanimous decision. Berto went on to face Jan Zaveck in a bounce-back contest, an entertaining five-round scrap that he won by TKO when Zaveck's corner stopped the bout because of a severe cut. Ortiz went on to a megafight with Mayweather, one in which he was infamously knocked out while in the process of apologizing for an earlier head butt.

Heading into 2012, a rematch between Ortiz and Berto makes perfect sense for HBO – a significant bout that figures to be as entertaining as the first.

Orlando Salido was unsuccessful in his bid to defeat Yuriorkis Gamboa in 2010 but was able to upset the applecart for a Gamboa-Juanma Lopez superfight, shocking the world with an eighth-round TKO of Juanma in April.

The dominating performance ruined promoter Bob Arum's plans to match his top featherweights in a pivotal clash. Lopez returned with a two-round TKO over Mike Oliver, while Gamboa cruised with HBO-televised victories over Jorge Solis and Daniel Ponce de Leon.

The camps of Salido and Lopez have expressed their desire for a rematch. If a rematch takes place and Lopez exacts revenge, it could clear the way for the bout with Gamboa to finally come to fruition, though much of the luster has since been removed.

Yes, there are many intriguing possibilities going into a new year. However, only one could rival the biggest boxing events in recent years. We hold out hope that Pacquiao-Mayweather will happen yet.

LISTEN UP

The IBF mandated a rematch between Yoan Pablo Hernandez and Steve Cunningham after Hernandez's controversial technical-decision victory on Oct. 1. The bout must take place by Feb. 11, with the winner mandated to next face contender Troy Ross.

Talks have been swirling around an intriguing middleweight unification bout between Aussie Daniel Geale and undefeated Russian Dmitry Pirog, to be televised on HBO or Showtime. Pirog, ranked No. 7 by THE RING, crashed the boxing scene in 2010 when he upset undefeated middleweight Danny Jacobs with a single shot in the fifth round. Pirog has yet to be seen on American television since his big win. Geale, ranked No. 2 by THE RING, scored the biggest victory of his career when he outpointed Sebastian Sylvester. ■

Limited quantities of *The Ring*'s popular double issues are available by mail order. Act now before they're gone!

Vol. II, 2004: Cover Story: A Leap To Immortality: Hopkins' Victory Over Oscar Takes Him To A New High. **Magazine Within A Magazine**: 30 Years Later: The Rumble In The Jungle Revisited. **Also Inside:** Andre Ward, Erik Morales, Fernando Vargas, Shane Mosley, Pete Ranzany.

Vol. III, 2005: Cover Story: Glen Johnson — Fighter of the Year. **Bonus Issue:** The Year In Pictures. **Also Inside:** Year-end awards, Vitali Klitschko, Jermain Taylor & Jeff Lacy.

Vol. IV, 2005: Cover Story: 20 At 40: How Much More Can Hopkins Accomplish Before 41? **Magazine Within A Magazine:** 20 Years Later: Hagler vs. Hearns Revisited. **Also Inside:** Trinidad-Wright preview, Hasim Rahman, Tszyu-Hatton preview, Larios-McCullough, Max Schmeling.

Vol. V, 2005: Cover Story: "Pretty Boy" Floyd: Just As Great As He Says He Is … Maybe Even Better. **Bonus Section:** The Pound-For-Pound Elite. **Also Inside:** Tarver-Jones II, Mike Tyson, quitters.

Vol. VI, 2005: Cover Story: Hopkins vs. Taylor II: 10 Crucial Questions Surrounding The Middleweight Championship. **Magazine Within A Magazine:** Tribute To Rocky Marciano. **Also Inside:** Raheem-Morales, Judah & Mayweather, Brian Viloria, *Box Like The Pros* book excerpt.

March 2006: Cover Story: Exclusive *Ring* Interview: Marco Antonio Barrera. **Bonus Section:** The 10 Fights We'd Like To See. **Also Inside:** Vitali Klitschko, *The Contender,* Roy Jones, Pongsaklek Wonjongkam, Nigel Benn.

May 2006: Cover Story: Forget Judah! It's Time To Bring Hatton And Mayweather Together! **Magazine Within A Magazine:** The Year In Pictures. **Also Inside:** Nicolay Valuev, Ray Mancini, top 10 trainers.

July 2006: Cover Story: Taylor vs. Wright: The Experts Pick The Winner. **Bonus Section:** The State of the Game. **Also Inside:** Joe Calzaghe, Mosley-Vargas, Emanuel Augustus, Tony DeMarco, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 2006: Gold Standard! Oscar's Brilliant Performance A Matchmaker's Dream. **Bonus Section:** *The Contender,* Season 2. **Also Inside:** Ricky Hatton, Wladimir Klitschko, Lou DiBella, Floyd Patterson.

Nov. 2006: The Sweet Life: Sugar Shane Is Back On Top. **Magazine Within A Magazine:** The 25th Anniversary Of Leonard-Hearns. **Also Inside:** Wladmir Klitschko, Baldomir-Gatti, Taylor-Wright, Manny Pacquiao, Jose Luis Castillo, Chris Eubank.

Jan. 2007: *The Contender:* Changing Boxing … Reviving Careers. Bonus Section: The Ring 100. **Also Inside:** Barrera-Juarez II, W. Klitschko-Brock preview, Edwin Valero, Clinton Woods, Mustafa Hamsho, psychological warfare.

March 2007: Best In The World? Pac-Man's Closing In On Pretty Boy. **Bonus Section:** The Ring's Fights of the Year: 1945-2005. **Also Inside:** Mayweather-Baldomir, Wladimir Klitschko, Peter Manfredo Jr., The Ring Interview: Bernard Hopkins.

May 2007: Samuel Peter: Is The Nigerian Nightmare The Heavyweight Of Our Dreams? **Magazine Within A Magazine:** The Year In Pictures. **Also Inside:** Ricky Hatton, De La Hoya-Mayweather preview, fitness gurus.

July 2007: Can Zab Judah Help Us Solve The Mystery Of Miguel Cotto? **Bonus Section:** The State of the Game. **Also Inside:** J.M. Marquez-Barrera, Rafael Marquez, Manny Pacquiao, Morrison & Mesi comebacks, Joe Louis, boxing's wild men, Canada.

Sept. 2007: All-Star Report Cards: **Also Inside:** Kelly Pavlik, Roy Jones, Floyd Mayweather, Diaz-Freitas, Gatti & Ward, Bite Fite, George Chuvalo, Pac-Man vs. all-time greats.

Nov. 2007: Pacquiao-Barrera II: Revenge Is The Great Motivator. **Bonus Section:** The Greatest Fight I Ever Saw. **Also Inside:** Hatton-Mayweather, Hopkins-Wright, Donaire-Darchinyan, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Arturo Gatti, Paulie Malignaggi, Dawson-Tarver, Sonny Liston.

Dec. 2007: Calzaghe-Kessler, Hatton-Mayweather — Britain Puts Its Best Fists Forward. **Also Inside:** Erik Morales, Vazquez-Marquez, Nick Katsidis, Joey Gamache, *The Contender,* welterweights, hometown fighters.

Jan. 2008: Dancing With Disaster: Pretty Boy Won't Be Doing The Tango With Hatton. Also Inside: Jones-Trinidad preview, Alfonso Gomez, Israel Vasquez, U.K. vs. U.S.

Feb. 2008: A Superstar Is Born: Pavlik Revs Up The Engine That Drives The Sport. Also Inside: Pacquiao-Barrera II, Holyfield-Ibragimov, Andre Berto, Junior Witter, postponements. **Bonus Section:** 20 Greatest Welterweights.

March 2008: Cotto Crashes The Elite: "I'll Fight Any Big Name." Also Inside: Calzaghe-Kessler, Bika-Codrington, Mayorga-Vargas, Manny Pacquiao, Bobby Scanlon, Joe Calzaghe book excerpt, lightweights, 10 burning questions for 2008.

April 2008: Floyd Mayweather: Fighter Of The Year**. Also Inside:** 2007 In Review, Marquez-Pacquiao II preview, Regina Halmich, "Boxcasting."

May 2008: Marquez vs. Pacquiao: The Experts Pick The Winner Of The Long-Awaited Rematch. **Also Inside:** Roy Jones, Paul Malignaggi, Floyd Mayweather, Joe DeNucci, 2007 in pictures.

June 2008: Exit Strategy: Is Oscar Ready For His Biggest Challenge Ever? **Also Inside:** Calzaghe-Hopkins preview, Larry Holmes, Steve Cunningham, Pavlik-Taylor II, Paul Williams, Jack "The Nonpareil" Dempsey.

July 2008: The State Of The Game: Our Exclusive Annual Report. **Also Inside:** Vazquez-Marquez III, Pacquiao-Marquez II, heavyweight slump, Ricky Hatton, Robert Guerrero, Billy Petrolle.

Aug. 2008: Double Champ Joe Calzaghe: If He Wants To Defend Both Belts … Let Him! **Also Inside:** Cotto-Margarito preview, Tarver-Woods & Dawson-Johnson, Casamayor-Campbell, Kevin Rooney, The Ring visits Cuba & Pacquiao in Philippines.

Sept. 2008: Antonio Margarito: Is He The Man To Cut Down Cotto? **Also Inside:** De La Hoya-Forbes, Amir Khan, best & worst managed fighters, "long-timers," *American Son* excerpt.

Fall 2008: All-Star Report Cards. **Also Inside:** Hatton-Lazcano, Kelly Pavlik, Timothy Bradley, Eddie Perkins, U.S. Olympic team.

Oct. 2008: Manny Pacquiao — New Worlds To Conquer. **Also Inside:** Chris Arreola, Floyd Mayweather, Holly Holm, Paul Malignaggi, 10 moments that changed boxing.

Nov. 2008: Antonio Margarito: Why Would Anyone Want To Fight This Man? **Also Inside:** Pavlik-Hopkins preview, Klitschko vs. Klitschko, Dawson-Tarver, Calzaghe-Jones preview, Enzo Calzaghe, Hall of Fame.

Dec. 2008: Oscar vs. Pac-Man Superfight Special! 10 Burning Questions, Big Man vs. Little Man, Experts Picks. **Also Inside:** Beijing Olympics, Ricky Hatton, Joshua Clottey, Juan Manuel Marquez, Prescott-Khan, boxing & race.

Jan. 2009: Bernard Hopkins: A Once In A Lifetime Phenomenon. **Also Inside:** Klitschko brothers, Paul Williams, *Contender 4,* Mosley-Mayorga, Chad Dawson, The Ring 100.

Feb. 2009: A Look Ahead To 2009. **Also Inside:** Hatton-Malignaggi, Calzaghe-Jones, Haye-Barrett, Darchinyan-Mijares, Juan Manuel Marquez, super middleweights.

March 2009: Fighter Of The Year Manny Pacquiao: Can He Carry The Load From The Man He Conquered? **Also Inside:** 2008 in review, best fighter poll, Juan Manuel Lopez, Baby Arizmendi.

April 2009: Crucial Decision! A Mayweather Comeback Could Reshape Boxing History. **Also Inside:** David Haye, Brian Mitchell, Pacquiao vs. Armstrong, footwork, Battle of the Legends.

May 2009: Pacquiao vs. Hatton — 20 Experts Pick The Winner. **Also Inside:** Mosley-Margarito, Mayweather vs. Roach, Andre Berto, Vic Darchinyan, Cotto & Pavlik, weigh-in controversy.

Please send me **THE RING DOUBLES** I have checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order for $7.95 (plus shipping and handling), payable to Sports and Entertainment Publications LLC, for each issue I am ordering.

☐ Vol. II, 2004	☐ November 2006	☐ February 2008	☐ October 2008
☐ Vol. III, 2005	☐ January 2007	☐ March 2008	☐ November 2008
☐ Vol. IV, 2005	☐ March 2007	☐ April 2008	☐ December 2008
☐ Vol. V, 2005	☐ May 2007	☐ May 2008	☐ January 2009
☐ Vol. VI, 2005	☐ July 2007	☐ June 2008	☐ February 2009
☐ March 2006	☐ September 2007	☐ July 2008	☐ March 2009
☐ May 2006	☐ November 2007	☐ August 2008	☐ April 2009
☐ July 2006	☐ December 2007	☐ September 2008	☐ May 2009
☐ September 2006	☐ January 2008	☐ Fall 2008	

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

CITY_____STATE____ZIP_____

TELEPHONE_____E-MAIL_____

SEND TO:

Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC
P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card #_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Expiration Date: ___/___ (MO/YR) ___ ___ ___ (3 digit security code)

Signature: _____

For U.S. orders, add $3.00 shipping and handling for a single issue ($5.50 for 2-3 issues; $6.50 for 4-5 issues; $8.00 for 6-7 issues; $13.00 for 8+ issues). To Canada and Mexico, add $4.00 for a single issue. To all other countries, add $9.00 for a single issue. For rates on larger orders, please contact us at custsrvcsep@sepublications.com. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

CONCERTS, SPORTS
& THEATER TICKETS
WWW BARRYS TICKETS .com
(800) 348-8499
ALL MLB, NBA, NFL, NCAA, NASCAR, SUPER BOWL, FINAL FOUR,
ALL STAR GAME & ALL MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS
www.BarrysTickets.com
WWW BARRYS TICKETS .com
Great Tickets! Great Service! Great Prices!
Call (800) 348-8499 or visit BarrysTickets.com for great deals
on concerts, sports and theater tickets, local & nationwide!